

A man with dark hair and a beard is sitting in a meditative pose on a sandy beach. He is wearing a white, long-sleeved, button-down shirt with a subtle pattern and olive green pants. His right arm is raised, with his hand open and fingers spread, palm facing forward. His left hand rests on his left knee. His eyes are closed, and he has a serene expression. The background shows the ocean and a clear sky.

AYOGA

AYURVEDA AND HEALTH

INSPIRED BY
Saul David Raye

Fusing Yoga and
Belly Dancing

Live GMO Free

Cross Training
Abs vs. Core

The Fun of
Laughter Yoga

DAYTRIPPING
OJAI VALLEY

SPA
CREATE YOUR
OWN EXPERIENCE

RELATIONSHIPS
PUTTING THE
PAST TO REST

Donna Karan's

Urban Zen

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features

20

Saul David Raye

Students praise Saul David Raye's constant reminders that there is no finish line; there is no enlightenment to attain outside of ourselves. There is only love. Yoga practice is love.

32

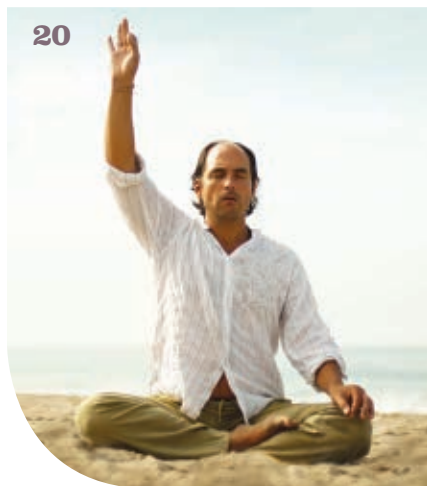
Donna Karan's Urban Zen

Fashion designer Donna Karan doesn't just want to dress people on the outside, she wants to address them on the inside. Through the Urban Zen Integrative Therapies Program, she does just that.

38

Laughter Yoga

A system of yoga and meditation based on the ability to not only take a deep breath, but to giggle, guffaw, chortle, laugh, relax, reduce stress, and even experience enlightenment.



contents

Community

12 Get Up & Go

14 Open Doors

Seva

18 A Vote is a Choice

Cross Training

24 Abs vs. Core

Practice Pages

28 Belly Dancing

Don't Miss This

42 Festival Highlights

Food & Home

52 Farmers' Corner: GMOs

Film

60 Yogawoman

In Every Issue

44 Meditation

46 Media

88 Lady Yoga

94 Astrology

96 Yantra

**Check Out Find Bliss
Los Angeles!** page 63



ON THE COVER:

Photo of Saul David Raye,
by Amir Magal.
Amirimage.com

"CRITICS CHOICE: TOP 5 FILMS"

- TIME OUT LONDON

IN CINEMAS NOW

YOGAWOMAN

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DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAEL S McINTYRE WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY KATE McINTYRE SARASWATI CLERE PRODUCED BY MICHAEL S McINTYRE KATE McINTYRE SARASWATI CLERE

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www.yogawoman.tv

Chaos. Perhaps it is an attribute of any era, of any period in time.

I wonder if there were the same concerns about the overwhelming amount of surrounding chaos during every other time in history. On some level, perhaps, this is the case. After all, yoga is nothing new; the practices, teachings, and philosophy of the yoga tradition offer us some relief from the whirling tornadoes, the cyclones, the hurricanes, and the typhoons that are part of the climate of life on this planet.

These days, people frequently comment on how we live in a time of chaos. Chaos was mentioned in this month's interview with fashion designer Donna Karan. She cited the importance of incorporating daily practices, personally and collectively, that help us to find our sense of calm and then maintain it within the chaos.

While we practice for this reason, we may still find ourselves slipping beneath the surface of stability as though there were soft and squishy quicksand beneath our feet.

Fortunately, we do have our practices – the teachings that have been handed down and passed from one person to another, from teacher to student, over millennia. And we have our collective community of support in all of the ways that we come together.

The great blessings of living in this time are that there are a myriad of ways to connect and there are millions of people who are committing themselves to living from the deepest core of their lives and to

sharing that with others. Each month in LA Yoga, this is our focus: to offer teachings that make a difference, to tell stories that inspire, and to suggest some calls to action.

In the countdown to the next election, we'd like to remind people to vote (voter registration ends October 22) and to consider the reasoning behind and the push for Proposition 37-the initiative to label GMO foods. Jen Ford explores some of the issues around GMOs in our food section this month. And, in this month's product page, we offer a selection of Non-GMO food and clothing. (Cotton is one of the big four GMO commodity crops, so buy organic!)

Additionally, inside these pages, we've offered our fourth installment of a magazine within a magazine: Find Bliss Los Angeles. Find Bliss features practices, intention-setting exercises, seasonal spa treatments, and in this month, rejuvenating techniques for spa treatments at home or in the spa.

We can choose to find the calm amidst the storm of chaos or at least to ride the waves with a sense of ease. And, along the way, remembering that we, too, can live a life of inspiration, intention-setting, and making a difference.

With Calm,



Felicia M. Tomasko, RN



Felicia and Editorial Coordinator,
Vanessa Harris hard at work.



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**Thank you to the entire Yoga community for
participating in and supporting this effort to educate,
inspire, and share wisdom.**

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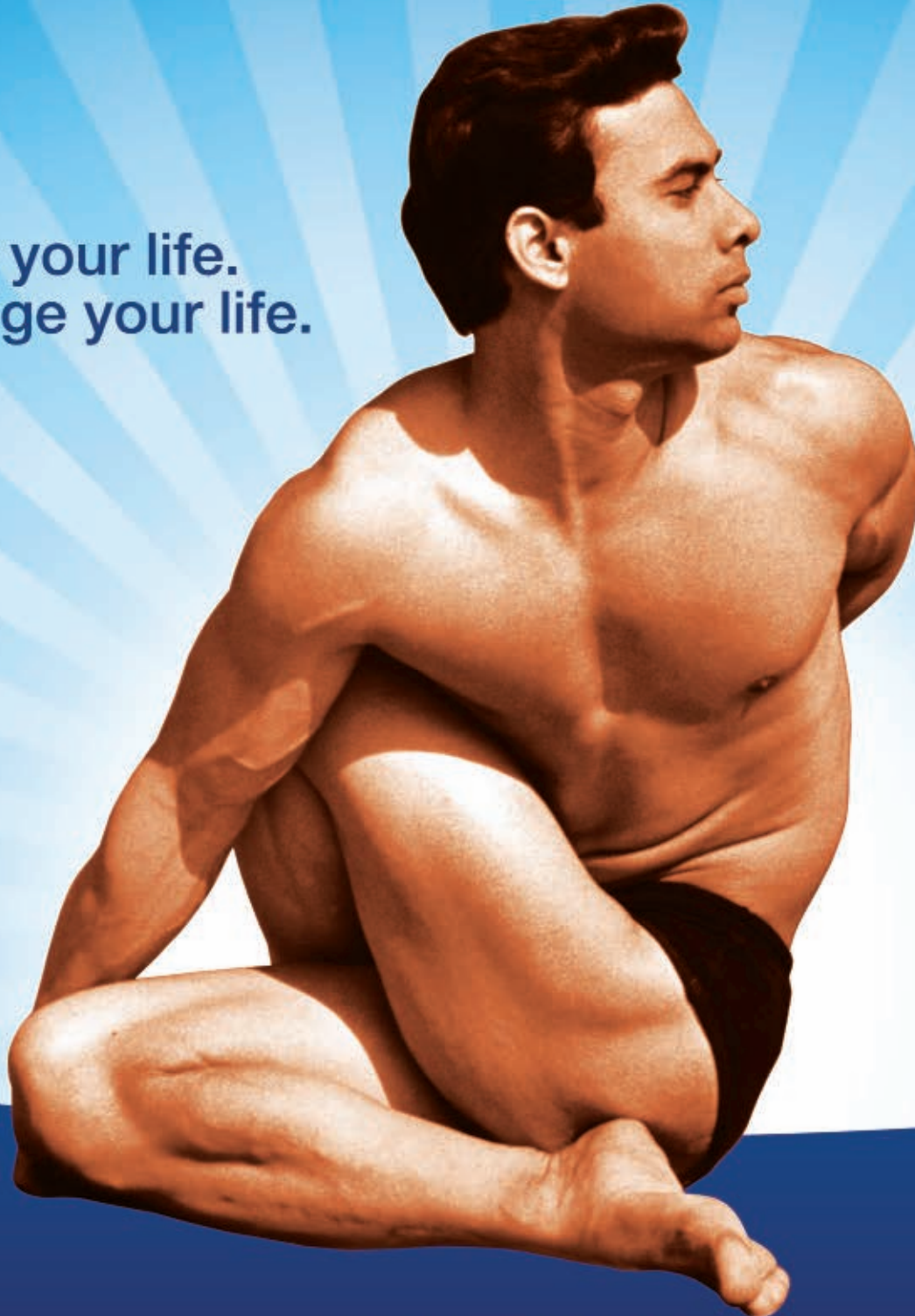
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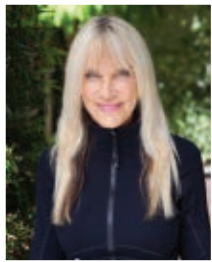
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our contributors



DALE NIELI

Writer

Dale Nieli believes that learning how to stand on our own two feet is the most important tool for staying grounded. In her private yoga and fitness training practice, she works from a core-based perspective with people she trains.

Zenbodies.com



HILARY KIMBLIN LICHT

Writer

When she's not leading yoga and hiking sessions under the trees, Hilary is enrolling migraine patients in her Laughter Yoga study at USC. She invites students to join Laughter Yoga sessions and Leader trainings and is available for corporate events and private functions.

Peacetreehealing.com



LEEZA VILLAGOMEZ

Writer

In 1995, Leeza's transition from the modeling world sparked her love for yoga, a journey that has led her to study with an array of spiritual teachers, traditions, and lineages. Married with two children, she is also the den mother at Yoga Den Health Spa in Corona.

Yogadenhealthspa.com



DAVID YOUNG-WOLFF

Photographer

David Young-Wolff loves to tell a story in a single frame. Never satisfied with the ordinary, he strives to create exciting images with a unique twist. In addition to his assignments, he is currently working on two other projects. One is Coming to LA, which involves photographing people who have moved to LA from other countries. He is also shooting photos to illustrate an upcoming book, Navajo Mothers, Navajo Daughters.

Davidyoung-wolff.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tell us what you think about what you read in LA Yoga. We love to hear from you. Write: Edit@layogamagazine.com

INTERN OPENING

Interested in interning at LA Yoga Magazine, Find Bliss, and the Bliss Network? Please send a cover letter and your resume in an email: Edit@layogamagazine.com



STAY TUNED!

Our annual teacher training issue is coming up in December. Make sure you're on our email list to receive updates: layogaonline.com/subscribe

WHERE I PICK UP MY LAYOGA



Ren Rasa Yogamaya E-RYT 500 picks up LA Yoga Magazine at Dancing Shiva in Los Angeles where she teaches Raja Vinyasa level 2-3.

Renyogamaya.com / Dancingshiva.com

Do you want to be featured in an upcoming issue? Send an email to:

Edit@layogamagazine.com and tell us where you pick up your copy of LA Yoga.

events & teacher trainings



urban zen integrative therapy

hazel patterson & joan hyman

october 6-november 11
pacific palisades



origins of alignment

donna farhi

october 12-16
tarzana



ashtanga's greatest hits

david swenson

october 12-14
santa monica - montana ave



prenatal teacher training

patti quintero

november 10-17
south bay

for more information on our events: eventsla@yogaworks.com • 310.664.6470 x125

200-hour teacher training

david kim & jesse schein

january 4-march 24

pacific palisades

3-month program

free class and info session: sunday, november 11 • 2-4pm • montana ave.



200-hour teacher training

john gaydos & patti quintero

january 7-february 1

pacific palisades

4-week intensive

free class and info session: sunday, november 11 • 2-4pm • montana ave.



for more information on our teacher trainings: teachertrainingla@yogaworks.com • 310.664.6470 x114



> Day of Inner Peace, 27 Oct.



> Siddhar Kirtan, 13 Oct.



> Raga Spirit 2012, 20 Oct.

GET UP & GO OCTOBER

FILMS

EcoSalon Film Series

A free screening of *Bonsai People: The Vision of Muhammad Yunus* with Q&A by filmmaker Holly Mosher. What if you could harness the power of the free market to solve the problems of poverty, hunger, and inequality?

28 October, 3-5:30pm.

Free. Microsoft Store at the Westfield Century City Mall, 10250 Santa Monica Blvd. Greenlifestyles.org

FESTIVALS/CONFERENCES

Conscious Life Expo

Speakers, films, classes, exhibit halls, international GMO symposium, and more.

5-7 October. LAX Hilton, 5711 W Century Blvd, LA. Consciouslifeexpo.com

Angel City Jazz Festival

With concerts at LACMA, REDCAT, the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre, and UCLA's Royce Hall, this festival is a vehicle for forward-looking artists to pay tribute to legendary artists.

5-14 October. Angelfcityjazz.com

The Ahimsa Festival LA

This event featuring yoga teachers, speakers including Marianne Williamson, healers, musicians,

and more benefits the nonprofit Ahimsa Festival Foundation, dedicated to supporting organizations working with victims of domestic violence.

14 October, 1pm-10pm.

Park Plaza Hotel, 607 South Park View St, Los Angeles. Theahimsafestival.com

Awareness Fest West

This multimedia weekend film festival includes conscious film premieres, a bike-in outdoor film screening, multiple donation-based yoga classes, and healthy parties. Films include *Surfing and Sharks*, *Margarita*, *Overdraft* (LA Premiere), *The Almond Tree* (LA Premiere), and *A Sister's Call*.

2-4 November.

Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Avenue, Venice. Awarenessfestival.org

I Can Do It!

Spiritual nourishment for your soul with speakers including: Dr. Wayne Dyer, Louise Hay, Kris Carr, Bruce Lipton PhD, Cheryl Richardson, and Doreen Virtue. The event features authors, film screenings, book signings, and conscious community.

26-28 October.

Pasadena Convention Center, 300 East Green Street. icandoit.net

Raga Spirit 2012

This is the first symposium and festival of Indian Music at UCLA. Prominent scholars, musicologists, and musicians of the highest caliber will showcase the splendor of the classical art form. Lectures, presentations, and music.

20 October, 9:30am-12pm, 2pm-12am.

Schoenberg Hall, The UCLA Herb Albert School of Music, 445 Charles E. Young Drive East, Los Angeles. Ragaspirit.com

WORKSHOPS/CLASSES

Fat-Burning Abs Workshop

Keep the inner fire burning and get a jump start on the holiday season in this afternoon of abdominal adoration and fat-burning flow with Lee Wolfort.

6 October, 1-3pm.

\$45. Yoga Daya, 8985 Venice Blvd, Culver City. Yogadaya.com

Samadhi Meditation

Chandresh Bhardwaj (Break the Norms) conducts this workshop highlighting a powerful combination of seven meditations.

7 October, 4-5:30pm.

Free. Swerve Studio 8350 W. 3rd St., Los Angeles. Swervestudio.com



> **New Frequencies of Healing**, 17 Oct.



> **Yogmata Keiko**, 6-7 Oct.



> **Angel City Jazz Festival**, 5-14 Oct.

Compiled by **Carrie Janell**

World Peace with Himalayan Siddha Yoga Masters

Himalayan Siddha Yoga Masters Pilot Baba and Yogmata Keiko Aikawa are known masters in spiritual circles worldwide as they teach methods of letting go of wrongs, anxieties, self-doubts, and fears that hinder the mind from being still and clear.

6-7 October, 10:30am-5pm.

Hilton Los Angeles Airport, 5711 West Century Blvd, Los Angeles.
Yogmata.org

Yoga on the Green

A proceeds go to St. Jude Cancer Rehabilitation & Wellness Programs. Yoga with a DJ, followed by a fashion/function show by lululemon and a reception.

10 October, 5:30pm-9pm.

\$35 Advance/ \$40 at the door.
Black Gold Golf Club,
One Black Gold Way,
Yorba Linda.
Synergymedfit.com

Live a GMO-Free Life

This eco-salon fundraiser and open house will feature music, biodynamic wine, food, live auction, a screening of *Genetic Roulette: The Gamble of our Lives* and more.

11 October, 6-10pm.

MOA Wellness Center
4533 S. Centinela Ave.,
Los Angeles.
Greenlifestyles.org/newgreen

Siddhar Kirtan

An evening of Kirtan with spiritual guide Nandhi with special guests and DJ "Dance the Kundalini."

13 Oct, 6pm. \$10. Naam Yoga,
1235 4th Street, Santa Monica.

Nandhi.com

Golden Heart Center

Golden Heart is a non-denominational, intergenerational, spiritual community celebrating the opening of a new location. Services in a casual atmosphere with upbeat contemporary music and an exciting message.

14 October, 11am.

Castle Heights Elementary School Auditorium, 9755 Cattaraugus Ave, Los Angeles.
Goldenheartcenter.org

Eco-Yoga Practice

Hosted by Jasmine Lieb and Dr. Chris Chapple, this practice and community gathering is a donation-only class supporting The Hill Street Meditation Center and The Green Yoga Association.

16 October, 6pm-9pm.

The Hill Street Meditation Center,
237 Hill Street, Santa Monica.

New Frequencies of Healing

Discover why hospitals and universities around the world are attempting to explain these profound healing frequencies. Eric Pearl tells of his remarkable story with live demonstrations.

17 October, 7:30pm. \$18.

Awakenings Center for Conscious Living, 25260 La Paz Rd. Suite D, Laguna Hills.
Awakeningsmetaphysicalbookstore.com

Reconnective Animals

Learn a powerful method to help heal animals with Renee Colton.

18 October, 5:30pm. Free.

Hyatt Regency Newport Beach,
1107 Jamboree Road,
Newport Beach.

An evening of Transcendental Meditation

Eminent researcher Dr. John Hagelin presents cutting-edge information on how a natural, effortless technique can reduce stress and enhance wellness.

18 October, 6:30pm. Free.

Westin Mission Hills Resort,
71333 Dinah Shore Drive,
Rancho Mirage.
PalmSpringsMeditation.com

Fight Eating Disorders Fundraiser

Join Lady Yoga for an unheated CardiYoga donation class and then bid on great silent auction items. Bring a mat, towel, and water. Funds raised support the humanitarian Fight Eating Disorders (FED) who provides services to those suffering from eating disorders.

20 October, 1-3pm.

By donation. Hot 8 Yoga,
1422 2nd Street, Santa Monica.
Comingoutoftherefrigerator.com

A Practical Guide to Healing

Dale Borglum, Co-Founder of the Hanuman Foundation Dying Center, offers weekend workshops for anyone wanting to deeply explore healing. CEUs available for MFTs, LCSWs, and RNs.

1st Workshop: 20-21 October.

St. Timothy Catholic Church,
10425 W Pico Blvd., Los Angeles.

2nd Workshop: 27-28 October.

Neighborhood Church of Pasadena, 301 North Orange Grove Boulevard, Pasadena.
Livingdying.org

Day of Inner Peace

Hosted by actor Josh Radnor, this charity event benefits Samtenling Monastery and the Q'ero People of Peru. The day includes teachings, practices, sacred art, music and dance in celebration of the potential for global peace.

27 October, 10am-10pm.

LADC Studios,
5955 S. Western Ave.,
Los Angeles.
Dayofinnerpeace.com



CAFE GRATITUDE VENICE

Café Gratitude, a 100% organic vegan restaurant, opened its newest location on Rose Avenue in Venice in August. The café prepares its gourmet dishes with produce sourced directly from their Be Love Farm in Vacaville. The creative

innovation of the menu is a fitting match for the thrill that founders Matthew and Terces Engelhart feel as a result of becoming part of the Venice community.

“We serve food that makes you feel good,” Terces said. “Our environment is fun and uplifting, and promotes a health consciousness in the community.”

The first Café Gratitude opened in the Bay Area eight years ago with ethics based on the practice of “Sacred Commerce,” a view of love through which their business operates, where mistakes are celebrated and strong communication and expressions of gratitude are prevalent.

The café’s tacos, called “I Am Transformed,” are a long-time favorite, along with the best-selling “I Am Whole” bowl, a macrobiotic dish with sea vegetables, steamed quinoa, and teriyaki almonds. Café Gratitude is affordable with plates averaging from \$8 to \$12.

“The combination of our dishes and prices offer a deal,” said Terces, “especially because it is food that feeds people’s mind, body and soul, and their overall spirit.”

By **Melissa Grace Hoon**

Café Gratitude, 512 Rose Ave, Venice. 424-231-8000.
Cafegratitude.com



THE YOGA COLLECTIVE VENICE

The Yoga Collective, a Vinyasa flow and Power Yoga studio, relocated in July from the Third Street Promenade to Rose Avenue in Venice. As Venice’s newest Yoga studio, The Yoga Collective offers up to seven unique

flow classes daily and upholds community mindfulness.

The studio now offers a five-day-per-week Ashtanga program as well as Yin Yoga classes. A 200-hour Yoga teacher training program with Tamal Dodge begins in September. The Yoga Collective teachers come from diverse backgrounds with varying teaching styles, teaching classes rooted in the traditions of Ashtanga and Iyengar from the lineage of Krishnamacharya through Sri K. Patanjali and B.K.S. Iyengar.

“We’re all about the teachers and people who come to our classes and give support,” said owner Grant Gottfurcht. “They’re a fresh new group of faces and energy that creates our community of collective space.”

Staying true to their “collective community consciousness philosophy,” the studio offers discounts to local artists. Rates make classes at the Yoga Collective exceptionally accessible at an introductory price of \$49 unlimited for 30 days and \$14 for a single drop-in class.

By **Melissa Grace Hoon**, an Orange County writer and cultural student who is training to become a Yoga instructor. Melissahoon.com

The Yoga Collective, 512 Rose Ave. Venice. 310-392-2000.
Theyogacollective.com

7 SPIRITUAL LAWS OF YOGA RETREAT

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EQUINOX SPORTS CLUB WEST LA

As a seasoned gym rat, I have worked out and trained clients in numerous gyms throughout the country and am usually jaded when it comes to walking into any gym. So it was a pleasure when I visited what is now Equinox Sports Club West LA, once the home of Sports Club LA.

This gym is 100,000 feet and four-and-a-half easily-navigable floors of pure fun with a luxury resort-like atmosphere. The group fitness classes include: Yoga, Pilates, shockwave, martial arts, barre burn, and tabata (an interval workout alternating bouts of high intensity training with short rests) with impressive instructors.

There are indoor regulation-sized courts for basketball, volleyball, squash, along with outdoor paddle and tennis courts. Oh, and a junior-sized Olympic pool, too. For those who want to combine relaxation and sweat, the second floor sundeck is equipped with lounge chairs and cabanas. Then there was my favorite, the eucalyptus steam rooms and hydro massage whirlpools. For a facial or massage, there's a spa on premises, and you can finish your visit with a light meal (such as baby kale, cranberry, and apple salad or the vegan teriyaki wrap) or refreshing smoothie at The Oliver Café/Lounge. Even with all these amenities, the club maintains a cozy and comfortable atmosphere, perfect for weekend staycation or daily workout.

By **Dale Nieli**, a fitness trainer, hypnotherapist, and yoga teacher.
Zenbodies.com.

Equinox Sports Club LA, 1835 Sepulveda Blvd, Los Angeles.
310-473-1447. Equinox.com/clubs/westla



SANTA MONICA POWER YOGA STUDIO B

Half an hour before class, you will usually see a line of students curving all the way to 2nd Street – and they're waiting patiently for one of the many notable yoga in-

structors teaching at Santa Monica Power Yoga West. This popular donation-based Power Yoga studio can now accommodate twice as many classes with the opening of Studio B. "There are additional classes for Studio A instructors such as Travis Eliot and Dan Ward, and a whole slate of new Power Yoga instructors for students to try," says studio business partner Christine Fang.

SMPY West is an extension of Bryan Kest's donation-based classes which started in a dance studio a few blocks away decades ago. "Everything about SMPY West is warm, open, and welcoming to anyone who wants to practice yoga, from the beginner to the experienced. There's nothing complicated: just come in, practice, and make a donation as you can at the end of class," says Christine. As Santa Monica's first green-certified yoga studio, SMPY West's Studio B was added on using conscious construction elements such as recycled furnishings, sustainable light fixtures, and cork flooring.

By **Melissa Chua**, a Los Angeles-based writer who loves staying active with inversions, arm-balancing poses and CrossFit. She recently ran the Disneyland Half Marathon. *M.chua13@gmail.com*

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A VOTE IS A CHOICE

BY TRACY COLUMBUS

I'm really not great with choices.

I've always liked the one from Column A and at least one from Column B approach...actually, make that at least 2 from column B.

When I can't decide what to wear, I wear Everything.

Presidential election time is the bane of my existence. Being asked to select just one mortal for the top job is a chore and in some years, an actual dilemma.

I'm sweating profusely as I spot the big "V" over 11/6 on my calendar. A year before the big day, I devote the predominant share of my time to marinating in the "news." I read everything, watch everyone, and go everywhere someone is protesting something, wondering if I agree with the issue or if I'm simply being codependent.

As the rumble of politics amplifies significantly around mid-September, becoming more forceful and frightening, I begin to actually listen - not to the words, statistics nor disputed facts presented all around me, but rather - to my heart.

Back to the tough choices...

Around 2:00 every afternoon, I pretend I can't decide what to do, then go dutifully to a 4:15 yoga class. It's the one choice I've made for 15 years and probably the one that best defines me; yoga is my orientation. Once in class, I choose to surrender all that I think to all that I feel and am.

Exhale...

Today I realized that I've spent 90 minutes of 280 something days with a group of "Voters" who, like me, have elected to come together simply to listen - to love, to hope, and to each other's breath - so that together, we may join our sounds and hear the peace of mind and heart that lives in our collective space.

We come back to this room in order to unfurl, process, and integrate, knowing that each of us has arrived here as a result of taking different roads. Once at this sacred destination, we'll slowly move in the same direction together, away from the noise of the day or election year, and towards a deep sense of dynamic stillness, freedom, understanding, and much needed connection.

From this place of greater clarity and truth, we seem to make better choices, whether at a salad bar or when voting. We try to be present enough to discern, listen, and mindfully witness what truly has meaning and impact in our homes and lives.

My favorite part of each day isn't difficult to decide. It's in the quiet focused moments after savasana, when I sit together with my conscious community and bow my noisy head to the wisdom of my heart. Then and there, in the stillness, I can hear the "right" answers to the big choices that are present in my life and in the voting booth. It's a good knowing.

This year I'll Vote with My Heart.

Register to vote in the November 6 election before October 22. For more information about Voting with the Heart and participating in YOGAVOTES, the yoga community's effort to increase voter participation, visit: yogavotes.org

Tracy Columbus is an entertainment & strategic marketing consultant in Los Angeles.

This year again, I partnered with Be Present to celebrate freedom of choice.

We created the VOTE 2012 t-shirt line, featuring the om sign in place of the letter O of vOte. The graphic is meant to connect us so we may recognize each other's soul and perhaps choose to engage authentically and respectfully about ideas that serve to optimize the quality of life for ourselves and our global family.

We are purposeful people by nature; elections allow us to be proactive, positive and present and to align our values, vision, voice and votes.

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NAVARATRI IS SANSKRIT FOR NINE NIGHTS

Just as a person spends nine months in the womb, during Navaratri each year, nine nights and ten days are spent going inward, harmonizing the feminine forces in creation, erasing negative karma, resting in the very source from where you are born, and emerging transformed in pure love. We are pleased to offer this special event on Sunday, Oct. 21, the most powerful of these days.

Freewill Donation. (Includes lunch.) RSVP, if possible, and register to offer a sankalpa (intention), at www.ArtofLivingLA.org. Also check that site for updates, including a possible Ganesha puja, Saturday, Oct. 20 (before the 7pm–9pm monthly kirtan).

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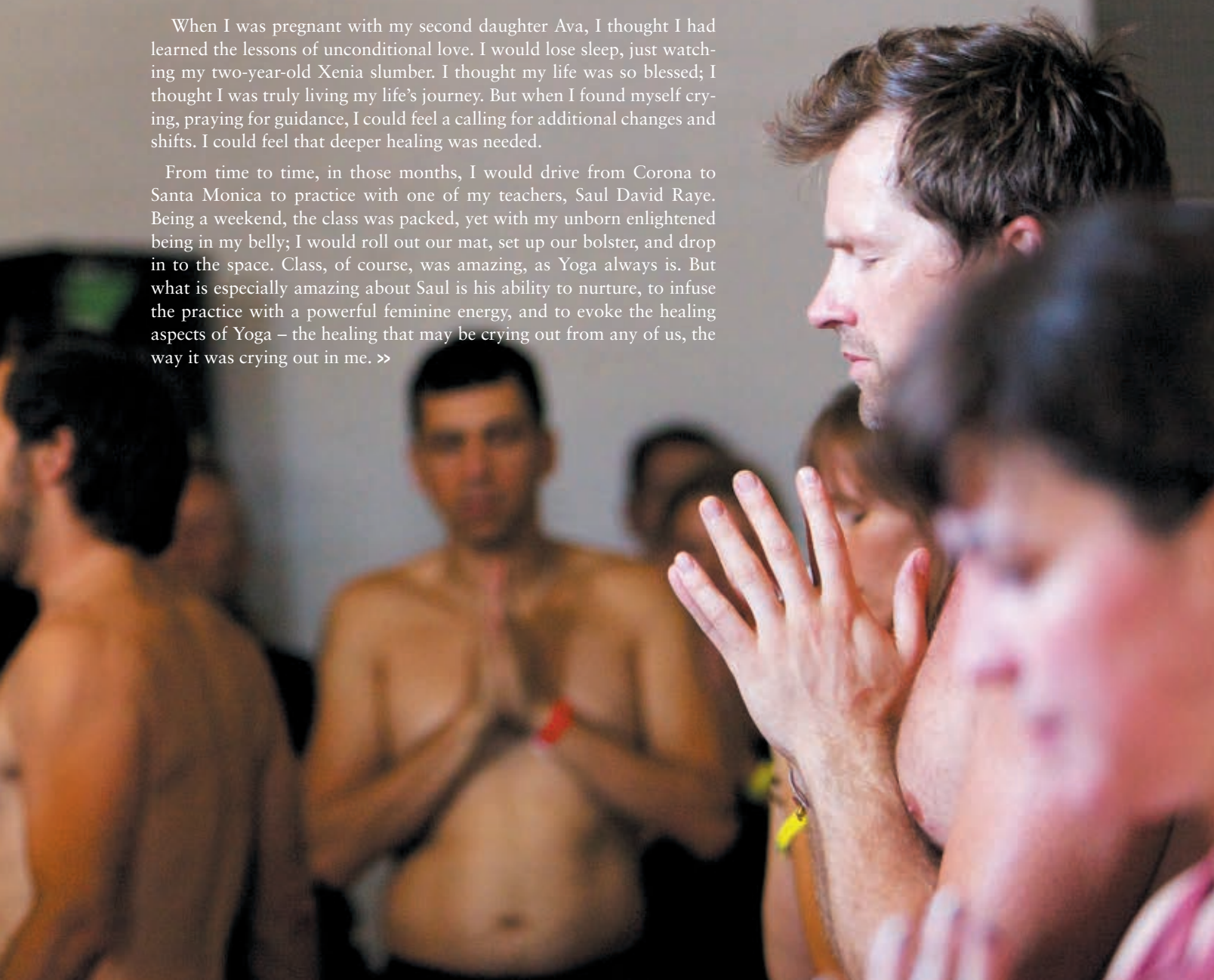


Saul David Raye: Inspiring a Healing Journey

BY LEEZA VILLAGOMEZ

When I was pregnant with my second daughter Ava, I thought I had learned the lessons of unconditional love. I would lose sleep, just watching my two-year-old Xenia slumber. I thought my life was so blessed; I thought I was truly living my life's journey. But when I found myself crying, praying for guidance, I could feel a calling for additional changes and shifts. I could feel that deeper healing was needed.

From time to time, in those months, I would drive from Corona to Santa Monica to practice with one of my teachers, Saul David Raye. Being a weekend, the class was packed, yet with my unborn enlightened being in my belly; I would roll out our mat, set up our bolster, and drop in to the space. Class, of course, was amazing, as Yoga always is. But what is especially amazing about Saul is his ability to nurture, to infuse the practice with a powerful feminine energy, and to evoke the healing aspects of Yoga – the healing that may be crying out from any of us, the way it was crying out in me. >>



«A few years later, when my children were four and seven, I enrolled in Saul's yoga teacher training and embarked on an even deeper journey of healing, Yoga, consciousness, and the depths of the journey called Life.

In each and every one of his classes, Saul calls upon the elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Ether. As he expresses, "In Yoga, the maha bhutas (great elements) contain the essence of life from the cosmic to the microcosmic." He is always encouraging people to connect viscerally with these forces and states that the means to do so is found throughout all of the world's sacred teachings. "We are all alive inside a living field of intelligence that expresses itself through the elements."

Saul's approach is not based on accomplishing handstand in the middle of the room, holding chaturanga, or analyzing the precise geometrics of a pose. Instead, he is interested in teaching students about energy, reminding us that we are each comprised of energy.

I remember something Saul frequently said in class: "We often hear our friends say things like, 'I am so stressed out; I need to go work out or take an intense class'." Saul would pleasantly, humbly remind us of the real energetic option, "We go to work IN." In class, the "working in" comes from moments of spontaneous meditation, a constant encouragement to be in the space of the heart. As Saul often quotes the sage Sri Aurobindo, "All of life is yoga."

Saul reminds students to connect and listen to the inner guru and he insists we are all teachers. To support this, he offers tools within the teacher training in subtle doses that continue to make sense over time. They have informed my own teaching.

Throughout the past 11 years of owning a yoga studio in Corona, I have seen how many people come to yoga with expectations, searching for answers, longing for healing. Learning to hold this space is a profound practice, one that comes from a connection to love and continued inspiration of one's own teachers. Saul models this, acknowledging the teachers who have inspired him throughout his life and whom he honors frequently for their constant influence. He insists that they have taught him the essential message of love, of the fact that we are all one.

**"There is no finish line,
no enlightenment to attain
outside of ourselves.
There is only Love."**

Fully understanding love sometimes comes with some pain, or the necessity to go through some serious healing of our own. On this path, working with energy is vitally important. In my case, Saul offered techniques and teachings along with sharing ancient wisdom from variety of sacred mystical paths.

While some people enroll in a teacher training course with a purpose in mind, Saul, on the other hand, didn't necessarily set out to become a teacher. He stood in front of the room for his very first class as many do – when his teacher asked him to teach. Although he felt he wasn't quite ready, he trusted his mentor. "He told me to share what I know," Saul recollects. "I still follow that and begin teacher trainings with that message... For me, a true teacher doesn't try to teach, they allow what is inside them to flow and inspire others to their own greatness."



Photo by Kristina Clemens.



Photo of Saul and his daughter by Jeff Skeirik/Rawtographer.

In his own life, he is continually a student sharing his own life's journey with humility while reminding others to keep their childlike mind. He constantly reminds us to soften, to operate more from the feminine energy as he says the collective energy on the planet now is a bit too masculine. When we do drop into this space, we are doing our part to enhance the "oneness." Saul reminds us to look around and, "notice now more than ever more people are doing Yoga all over the world."

The key now, according to Saul, is for yoga practitioners to connect to the living being of Mother Earth, to literally get grounded. He speaks from experience, as he lives in the mountains as part of his own effort to maintain balance. That connection with nature as well spending time in the ocean, with his family, in his own practice of yoga, and making music—these are the things that keep him grounded.

Saul's love of music is demonstrated often. He finds that, combined with yoga, it creates magic. Whether he is leading a chant or a full-on kirtan, inviting musicians to play in his class, or taking the stage at Bhakti Fest, the tremendous power of the universal language to heal and transform is a frequent part of Saul's teaching. He grew up in the music business, left it, and then came back to it through yoga, encouraging many of the kirtan musicians within the community, and even co-producing Dave Stringer's first two kirtan albums, *Japa* and *Mala*. "There is tremendous power in conscious music to uplift, heal, and transform," Saul says.

Music helps us get out of our heads and into our hearts. "Being in the energy field of the heart is deeply healing. Science tells us that the heart is over 5,000 times stronger energetically than any other part of our bodies." This space of the heart reminds us, as Saul says, "There is no finish line, no enlightenment to attain outside of ourselves. There is only Love."

For more information about Saul David Raye, visit: Sauldavidraye.com

Leeza Villagomez is a mother, daughter, sister, aunt, grandmother, wife, student of yoga, and entrepreneur who is the director/owner of Yoga Den Health Spa, a holistic healing center in Corona, California. Leeza loves sharing yoga and all its paths to finding balance in family, health, happiness and joy. Yogadenhealthspa.com

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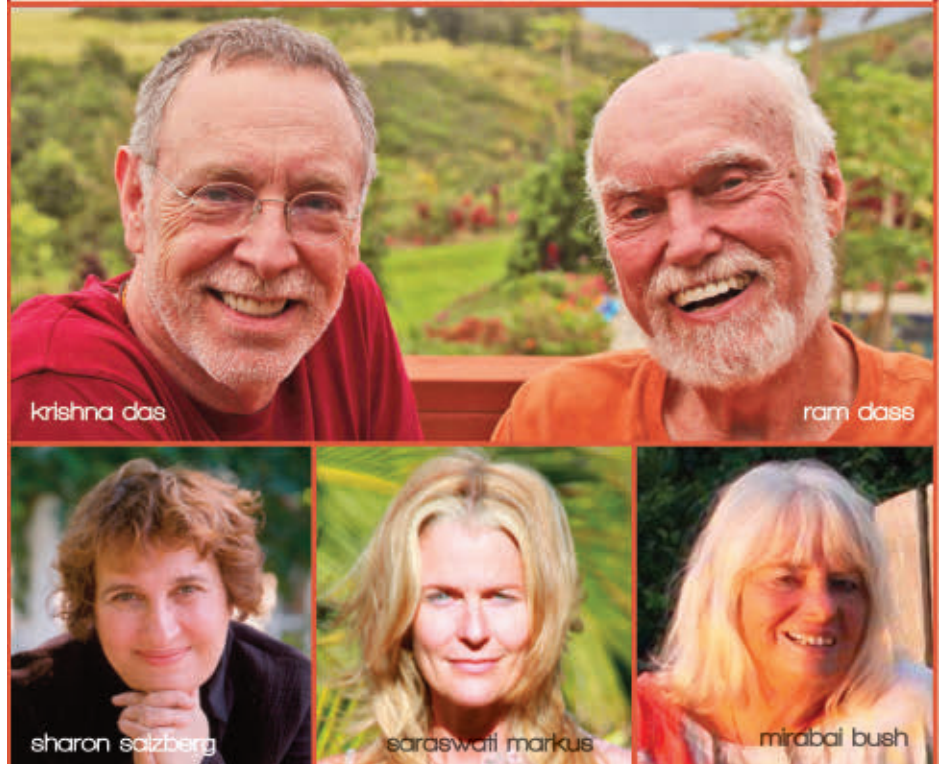
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NO MUSCLES LEFT BEHIND

ABS vs. CORE

BY DALE NIELI PHOTOS BY DAVID YOUNG-WOLFF



Graduation, children's birthdays, new jobs, a coveted car, or even the latest iPhone: These are some of the markers by which many of us measure our lives. For me – the most significant markers in my life have been measured by the current fitness trends.

When I began cross-training many years ago, it was all about striving for abs of steel, for the sculpted six-pack, or a slick set of washboard abs. Jane Fonda was the Queen of VHS, and “Thriller” was the soundtrack to which we did grapevines across the room. In Yoga class, the popular cue for us was to “tuck your tailbone,” (something we still hear today). Sit-ups became our religion: As we held dumbbells over our heads for added weight, we repeated “no pain...no gain,” and our repetitions were faster, harder, and longer.

While we were sweating, many injuries were beginning to become ignited, due to a lack of understanding of the body's biomechanics. Chiropractors' offices were filled with people complaining of lower back issues and neck strain; the continuous tucking of my tailbone sent me into lordotic hell. My iliopsoas muscles were always tight, taking my pelvis on a constant tour of either the east or west side.

SWISS BALL CRUNCHES USING PILATES RING

- ▶ Place the Pilates ring between the inner thighs.
- ▶ Sit in front of the ball, position it beneath your lower back, and lie back on the ball with the feet hip distance apart.
- ▶ Maintain the alignment of your head and neck throughout the entire range of motion.
- ▶ Interlace your hands behind your head, chin dropping slightly, and slide your shoulder blades back.
- ▶ As you exhale, contract and draw your abdominal muscles in as you lift your torso upwards.
- ▶ As you inhale, lower your body back down.
- ▶ Squeeze the Pilates ring between your thighs throughout the entire exercise.

Over time, crunches replaced sit-ups. Unfortunately, backs were still rounded and heads and necks kept jutting forward. While we may have been recruiting more muscles, we were still isolating only that Almighty AB called the rectus abdominis.

Fortunately, we're entering a dynamic cross-training phase that transcends transitory fitness trends and helps us to approach an integrated understanding of the complexity of the muscles of the core. We are beginning to appreciate how these muscles, when worked properly, support the overall balance and flexibility of the spine, and in fact, support all of our movements.

Most of our daily activities are generated from our core muscles. And the core is far more than simply the rectus abdominis. The other abdominal muscles include the external obliques, internal obliques, and transverse abdominis. The external obliques run along the side and the front of the torso. The internal obliques, which lie under the external obliques, run in opposite directions, while the transverse abdominis are the deepest of the abdominal muscles. The transverse abdominis is a muscle you can feel when you cough.

The core includes these abdominal muscles as well as the deepest muscles around the hips, trunk, back, and pelvis. While core can mean many things (and can include emotional and energetic components), this discussion focuses on the physical core.

A strong core will maintain the stability of the pelvis and will help the spine maintain good alignment. This then improves our balance and coordination. A strong core also promotes our ability to take a deep breath, since the core muscles are attached to our diaphragm as well as to our rib cage. This expanding of the rib cage allows for both inhalation and exhalation to be more effective. Nothing in life happens in isolation, and this is also true in our bodies. Our abdominal muscles are part of our core, which is part of a much greater whole – a whole that benefits from our awareness.

Core Strengthening Exercises

Drawing inspiration and influence from Yoga, Pilates, and modern exercise physiology, these 5 poses are my go-to for strengthening the core of the body that supports proper functioning of the spine.

Equipment Needed: Foam Roller, Pilates Ring & Exercise Ball. >>

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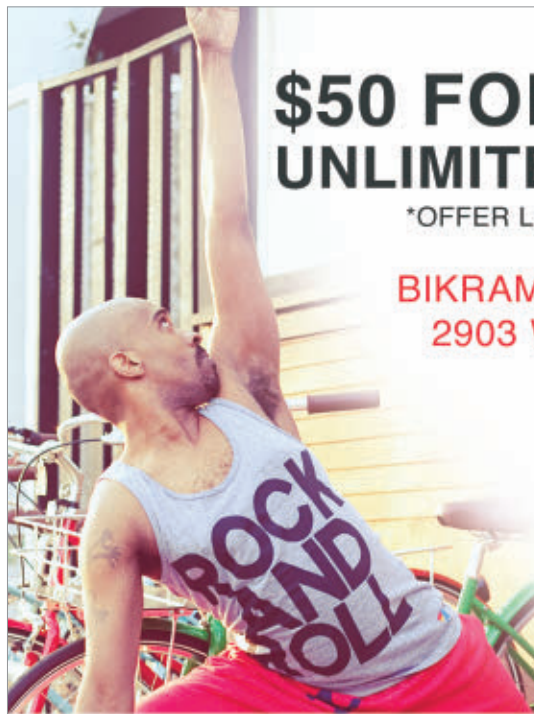
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CORE AWARENESS

- ▶ Lie lengthwise on the roller.
- ▶ Check that your head and back are in contact with the roller, and that it is positioned at the center of the spine.
- ▶ Your knees are bent, feet hip distance apart.
- ▶ As you inhale, allow your spine to lengthen, as you exhale, draw your navel in toward your spine. Hold for 12 beats (Note: To increase intensity, bring your feet together.)

CORE STABILIZATION (ALTERNATE ARM/LEG LIFTS)

- ▶ Begin as above, draw navel to the spine, then extend your right arm overhead, while extending and lifting the left leg in front of you.
- ▶ Hold, then switch, with the left arm overhead, and the right leg extends out.
- ▶ Alternate: do 6 on each side, then rest for 30 seconds and repeat for one other set of 6.



FOREARM PLANK

- ▶ With the elbows beneath the shoulders, the forearms on the mat, keep your body in a straight line.
- ▶ Keep the head and neck in a neutral position.
- ▶ Lengthen the tailbone toward your heels.
- ▶ With every exhalation, draw your navel in to your spine.
- ▶ Maintain relaxation in the jaw, neck, and throat throughout the pose.
- ▶ Breathe easily and hold without strain for 30 seconds (as your strength increases, hold longer building towards one minute.)



BICYCLE

- ▶ Lie on your back with your legs bent and your feet hip width apart.
- ▶ Place hands behind your head, and slide your shoulder blades down your back. Engage your abdominal muscles.
- ▶ Exhale as you extend your left leg out and simultaneously lift and rotate your upper body, bringing your left elbow in the direction of your right knee. Inhale and release.
- ▶ Slowly continue to alternate side to side.
- ▶ Repeat 12 times on each side, rest for 30 seconds then repeat.

Dale Nieli (MSW, hypnotherapist) is a certified yoga and fitness expert. She works primarily with clients in the entertainment industry out of her private studio in Santa Monica. She can be reached at Dalefit@roadrunner.com

Dale is wearing tops by Vyana Yoga's Alluring Apparel line and figure-flattering pants and capris by Style Firm LA. Vyanayoga.com / Stylefirmclothing.com

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FUSING DANCE AND YOGA WITH A TRIBAL BEAT

TRIBAL FUSION BELLY DANCE SUPERSTAR
RACHEL BRICE SHIMMIES ON A MAT.

BY BETH PRANDINI & FELICIA TOMASKO PHOTOS BY ARLENE KARNO

At first glance, yoga and belly dance might not be obvious companions. Yet movement is part of culture worldwide, our human experience, and how we express ourselves creatively.

Rachel Brice – yogi and tribal fusion belly dance superstar (literally, as she is a touring member of the Belly Dance Superstars) – is a master at combining these. Synthesis is second nature for this founder of the Indigo Belly Dance Company, teacher of The 8 Elements™ approach to dance, and member of the vibrant tribal fusion belly dance community.

When it comes to yoga, she cites the influence of her teacher, Gary Kraftsow. Rachel infuses belly dance instruction with yoga to enhance the ability of dancers to experience their body – especially a healthy relationship their spine.

We caught up with Rachel during a couple of her performances.

How did you become interested in belly dancing?

I was 16 in Southern California where there is a lot

of emphasis on the way the body looks. I had this idea that my butt was fat and that I had no right to be a fully-realized sensually proud woman because of this. Then I saw a woman performing belly dance at an outdoor festival; she was large yet drop-dead gorgeous. Her costume moved like liquid silver and she had braids, tattoos, and was dripping with jewelry. She was proud of her body—and fierce with incredible posture. I started crying because I was so moved that this woman who wasn't society's idea of perfect was completely proud of who she was. I began belly dancing the next day.

How does your yoga practice inform your performance?

My teacher Gary Kraftsow gave me a practice that includes chants, visualizations, and breath; the main purpose is to realize that that which animates me is the same as what animates all beings. He has me bring it into the third chakra, which is related to where you are in relationship to others. I practice before I perform and it's helpful for me before I get

on stage to realize, "Oh, I'm not separate from these people." It's not me doing something to them or trying to be liked by them.

How does yoga influence your teaching?

Ten years ago, when I discovered Gary Kraftsow's Yoga for Wellness, I started incorporating his approach to the biomechanical principles of movement in the way I teach dance.

Gary's core teaching is that breath powers all movement. This is helpful for people who are driving in traffic and then have to run into dance class; they can come in, sit down, and breathe with us.

Using the breath in asana works with the deepest spinal musculature –the core focus in belly dancing. While we move the hips a lot, there is so much happening with the spine that it is necessary for people to be able to access the deepest musculature here and this happens through the breath practice.

I've also noticed how much different postures affect the mind, so it is helpful after a crazy belly dance practice to practice yoga – even if for only 15 or 20 minutes – so people don't get behind the wheel of their car after an intense shimmy drill feeling literally shaken up. I've found that applies to me, too.

Are many of the people to whom you teach dance already practicing yoga?

What's exciting about belly dance is that it draws people who have no other training: people come to belly dance in their 40s, 50s, and 60s having never danced before nor having a physical practice of any kind.

In the beginning, I experienced resistance because people would say, "I thought I was going to a belly dance class, so why do I have to bust out my yoga mat?" Now I'll walk in to a room full of people on their mats ready to practice. I heard another dance teacher laugh, "You can always tell when people have practiced with you because they've got their yoga mat and notebook ready to go."

How does yoga affect your students' dance or their relationships with their bodies?

The first thing it does is to bring people's awareness to the importance of integrating the spinal curves. Before I studied Viniyoga, I taught belly dance with a flat low back. It wasn't until I experienced serious injuries that I realized that the spinal curve is there for a reason.

Respecting this curve, maintaining its natural relationships, and cultivating stability rather than trying to contort the spine into unnatural positions shifts people's awareness and experience. They ask, "Oh, I am supposed to have this lumbar curve? I am supposed to keep this lumbar curve while I am throwing my pelvis around in all kinds of different directions?"

There is an increased respect for the spine. People benefit from having attention brought to the fact that their spine is more important than making the movement look a particular way.

People often come to dance thinking, "I'm prepared to hurt myself in order to look good." A class with a strong yoga foundation approaches the movement as instead, "Do this if it feels like it is supporting your body."

The thoughts that come with a big question mark or a sense of wondering if this is good for me usually occur right before people get hurt. So I encourage people to take breaks, take notes, and let go of the idea that they need to look any other way than the way they look right now.

How do you combine the aesthetics of dance with nourishing the body?

The beauty of belly dance is it is a folkloric dance form. Of course there are general guidelines, but other than that, you dance the way that feels good to you as long as it is safe for the body. It is less about achieving some kind of predetermined gold standard and more about optimizing your movement.

Everybody interested in belly dance is into different aspects. Some are into technique, just like yoga; some want to achieve the gold standard of the perfect asana and others just want to go to class then have a smoothie and hang out with friends. For belly dance, there's even more: performers, seamstresses who want to show off their costumes, musicians who love expressing music in a different way. Everyone is here for a different reason, and everyone's bone structure is different, their musculature is different, what they ate for lunch was different. There are so many variables to take into account to create a supportive environment.



Rachel Brice facilitates a supportive environment through performance, workshops, her DVDs, and through her virtual studio, Datura Online. Rachelbrice.com

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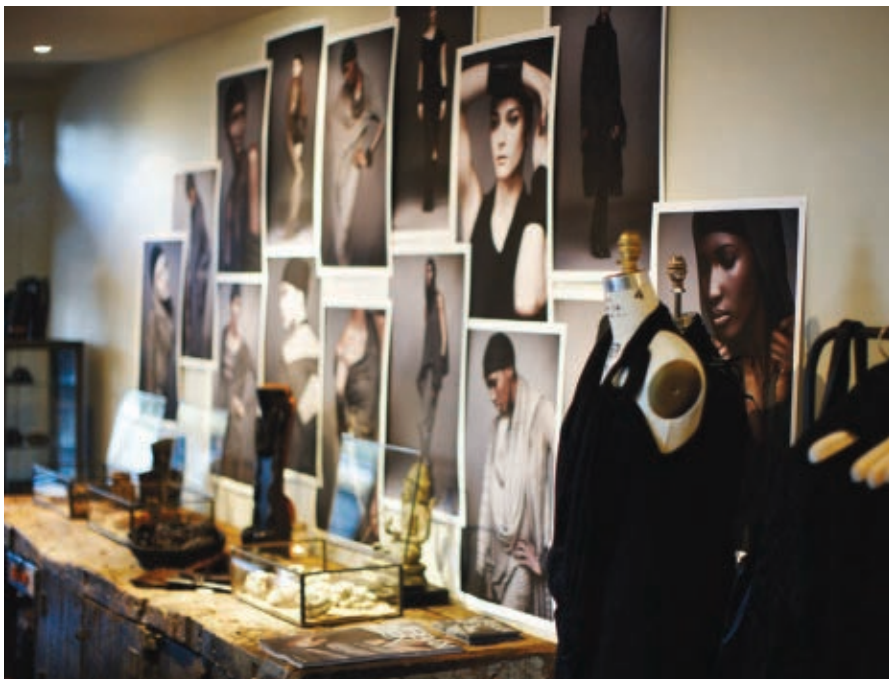
donna karan urban zen

FROM DRESSING THE BODY TO ADDRESSING THE SPIRIT
URBAN ZEN INTEGRATIVE THERAPIES COMES TO LA.

BY FELICIA M. TOMASKO

An idea can spark a movement that gains momentum and reaches far beyond one person. This is the case with the Urban Zen Integrative Therapies Program, established by fashion designer and long-time yogini Donna Karan. In 2007, the 10-day Urban Zen Well-Being Forum brought together an interdisciplinary group of people interested in change in the healthcare system. The Urban Zen Foundation then launched the Urban Zen Integrative Therapies Program in 2009, training healthcare providers and experienced yoga teachers in the complementary

modalities of yoga therapy, therapeutic use of essential oils, Reiki, nutrition, and contemplative caregiving. A team of teachers and leaders, including Rodney Yee and Colleen Saidman, Beth Israel Medical Center integrative physician Woodson Merrell, and others, has helped to support and expand the project. In Los Angeles, the Urban Zen Foundation is working with UCLA Medical Center and YogaWorks to train practitioners and offer a means to shift the paradigm around healthcare and to create a community of change.



It is my understanding that the inspiration for the Urban Zen Integrative Therapies Program (UZIT) came when your husband Stephen was dying of lung cancer in 2001 without access to the types of integrative therapies now offered. What changes have you seen locally, and in the health-care system as a whole, as a result of the Urban Zen Integrative Therapies Program?

When I started the program, I was frustrated by the healthcare system because I felt it was only disease-oriented and that nobody was taking care

of the patient whether inside or outside the hospital. Providers were being taught by the book. I was fortunate enough to have someone who could take care of my husband holistically, but I wondered, “What do other patients do?”

We hosted a 10-day conference asking how we can shift the healthcare and educational systems. Rodney Yee, my yoga teacher at the time, asked about utilizing the yoga community since a yogi understands the whole mind/body.

I understood that it was not just yoga that was >>

I started to work in Haiti after the earthquake. When there, I was inspired by the amount of creativity there and the artistry...

«important, but also Reiki, massage, aromatherapy, meditation, and nutrition so we combined these to train integrative therapists. Rodney Yee and Colleen Saidman pioneered the project and we worked with Young Living Oils and collaborated with Buddhist Rishi Joan Halifax who works closely with death and dying.

My doctor, Woody Merrell, who is a holistic doctor, said let's bring the integrative therapists into Beth Israel Hospital in New York. I wanted to do a study on one floor to see the merit of this program. When it was clinically tested, it was shown that \$999,000 of hospital costs were saved as a result over the study period. There is no question that the response has been phenomenal, yet is still a challenge to get it into hospitals. Now UCLA has picked up the program, and they are astounded by it.

What is your underlying philosophy driving this initiative?

For me, it's not only yoga. Most people think that yoga is just putting your legs around your head.

Yoga is a sense of being, of being present, and being able to breathe, and to let go.

When I started Urban Zen, I was looking at the past, the present, and the future. For me, the past is related to respecting and preserving cultural wisdom, the present is health care, and the future is education. This is a program that should be instituted into every single school because until a child is settled in a centered place, they can't absorb any information. These three components [cultural wisdom, health care, and education] are necessary for integrating mind, body, and spirit; these are the three components of the Urban Zen Foundation.

Urban Zen is community, consciousness, and change. This is not really about me; it's about collecting like-minded people together who want to create this change. Urban Zen is about creating a community of connection. Using it as a model, I would love to see the people of LA, Chicago, Idaho, and other places have an Urban Zen.

Right before my husband passed away he said,



Donna visiting a child at St. Damien Hospital in Haiti.

“Donna, whatever you do, take care of the nurses.” I realized that they were vitally important to the process I lived with for so many years. At the same time, they didn’t have the knowledge I was able to bring through the Urban Zen Integrative Therapies.

Education for healthcare providers is an important piece.

Doctors and nurses must be trained; what is beautiful about UCLA Medical Center is that they are actually teaching the nurses and doctors there. In terms of the healthcare system, I also believe there are two missing people in the industry today. One is the patient navigator to prevent a patient from becoming lost when they are trying to navigate the healthcare system. The second is the integrative therapist. Speaking of the integrative therapist, we are working in Haiti now, bringing integrative therapists into Haitian hospitals where the nurses were under a lot of stress. To see these people doing yoga is extraordinary.

How did you decide to bring these programs to Haiti?

I started to work in Haiti after the earthquake. When there, I was inspired by the amount of creativity there and the artistry; this connected to my mission for the preservation of culture. Then when I went into the hospitals – with everything going on there – it was overwhelming. There was a question of how people would be receptive to the integrative therapies. It is astonishing how much they love it; now my mission is to teach Haitian people so that they themselves can own it.

You’re offering the training here in Los Angeles through YogaWorks.

We wanted to scale this up and have people learn the program throughout the country. My dream is that this is taught in every single yoga school to give people the opportunity to have the place and space to find the calm in the chaos. That’s what I feel Urban Zen is all about. YogaWorks got it immediately.

What inspired you to begin your yoga practice?

I have no clue, really. I started to study yoga when I was 18. I wanted to be a dancer when I was young; I loved Martha Graham, and the movement of the body. I love sports and I have always been very active, but there was something about the quiet of yoga that I loved. And I love the student-teacher relationship.

How do you integrate some of the other modalities, such as Reiki and aromatherapy, in your own life?

I live with aromatherapy day and night; I even ask people all the time if they want to do a little aromatherapy or a little Reiki. The minute people walk into my home, they ask what they just walked into. I believe in the energy that you set up in your home – you just feel it, so I set up an energy of calm and peace.

What are some of your favorite oils?

My favorite is Thieves by Young Living. When I feel like I’m getting sick, I even drink it.

What do you do to help yourself find your own calm within the chaos?

I meditate, practice yoga, use oils, incorporate healthy food (including juicing) and nutrition.

When you travel to LA, what are your favorite places that you visit to help you maintain your sense of balance?

I’m always there for such short visits. But of course, I really love my store. (Urban Zen, in West Hollywood.) I’m also a Malibu beach nut.

What have been some of your most rewarding moments doing this work of healthcare and philanthropy?

I love going into the hospitals because I love actually doing the work on people. It’s also very challenging: Designing for me is like kindergarten next to what this is all about: You can dress people on the outside but addressing them on the inside is another world and very challenging.

How does your work in fashion and design support Urban Zen?

I started as a designer with a body suit – a body suit since I was interested in yoga from a young age. When I started designing 70 pieces, it was from a yogic mindset. And I realized that as I built my brands Donna Karan and DKNY, I was looking for a brand that wasn’t about a season – but was really about everyday life. If you can’t sleep in it and go out in it then I don’t want to know about it. Right now, I’m in my yoga clothes, this is my core base and everything else is secondary. As far as accessories, I love scarves because I can add them to anything, and dress something up and not have to think about it.

As I was designing the retail environment of Urban Zen, I was influenced by my travels around the world, so I created a retail environment with products showing culture and artistry from around the world, such as Bali, Africa, Haiti. Urban Zen is also a way for me to feature a collection of wardrobe basics, such as a seasonless, timeless, ageless jersey dress. >>

«In dressing rooms, I learn more about customers than anywhere else. It starts with the dress but it is really about what is going on in their lives. That's when I realized that you can't only dress them on the outside but you need to address them on the inside. For me this is where the worlds of philanthropy, commerce, design and creation all come together.

What's next for you?

I have so many dreams. I wish for a community of change, people who realize that what is needed in education, in hospitals, even in business, is to put the mind, body, and spirit together. I would like to see this happen in nursing schools, for doctors, for everyone.

Yoga is part of this dream because I see that yoga is community-driven and that is it is one of the tools necessary for the world we live in today. We are living in chaos and uncertainty.

This brings up the question, how do we support each other?

For me it is creating a community of change. Yoga is becoming so big and important because it creates a community in class. I prefer going to a class than doing yoga on my own because I like the energy that way.

What are some of the components you utilize to create calm in your retail store, your home, and in the integrative care programs?

It is energetic – beyond the aromatherapy, there is a soul. You walk into Urban Zen and there is a natural, elemental feeling that entices all of the senses. In New York, the Urban Zen center is where my husband's studio used to be and the energy there is amazing. My husband was an artist and a sculptor and he is in the inspiration for what I do today.

What have been some of your most surprising moments working on this project?

When I go into hospitals, I'm blown away by the reactions of the patients, nurses, and doctors. Then the frustration I feel is wondering how I get this out there more; I know we have something great that is not just about me. It's about the "we" and the collaboration of bringing together the entire community to integrate these concepts in schools, in every single educational curriculum, and into healthcare. These concepts of the yogic mind, yogic practices, Reiki, using essential oils, all of these practices are part of living.

Urban Zen retail store:
9045 Nemo Street, West Hollywood.
310-247-1255: urbanzen.com

Urban Zen Integrative Therapy Program:
urbanzen.org

UZIT program in LA at YogaWorks:
urbanzen.org/uzit-yogaworks

Donna Karan: donnakaran.com



I love sports and I have always been very active, but there was something about the quiet of yoga that I loved. And I love the student-teacher relationship.



Urban Zen in West Hollywood.





laughteryogahahahaha

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF IN THE MIDST OF THIRTY OTHERWISE NORMAL-SEEMING ADULTS WHO ARE ALL CHANTING "HO HO HA-HA-HA! HO HO HA-HA-HA?"

BY HILARY KIMBLIN LICHT PHOTOS BY DAVID YOUNG-WOLFF

I was pondering this when the instructor interrupted my thoughts with the instruction, "Greet one another and clap together!" He modeled an improvised patty-cake-like greeting with a nearby woman. They struggled to keep the rhythm with their hand movements as they repeated, "Ho Ho Ha-ha-ha." Soon they were reduced to gently holding one another's fingers as they laughed heartily.

A guy with a goatee stood before me expectantly. There was no time to think. "Ho Ho Ha-ha-ha!" I said as I reached my hands towards his. He spun around, offering me his hands behind his back, "Oh! Ho! Ho!" I said slapping his palms and laughing unexpectedly. A woman with a halo of flowers in her hair bounced toward me and we clapped and chanted together.

"Now place your hands just below your chins. You are holding the world's smallest lawnmower between your fingertips. And guess what? It is powered by laughter. Start your engines!" The crowd instantly revved their mowers, "Heh, Heh, Heh."

"Yes! Go and give somebody a haircut!" Before I knew it, hands whizzed above my head, creating an imaginary mohawk with their collective, "Hahahahaha!" I found myself laughing at the ridiculousness of it all. When was the last time you have seen thirty complete strangers willingly cracking up together – for no reason at all?

I landed in the middle of this group after a phone call from my sister. She had just heard about a new type of yoga on NPR. "You're a yoga instructor and you've done improv and comedy – you should check it out!"

My next move was to log on to www.laughteryoga.org; I quickly scanned the pages, then spontaneously signed myself up for the next Laughter Yoga leader training in Oceanside, California, where I found myself surrounded by childlike adults who were eager to play, laugh and move.

After guiding us through twenty minutes of laughter exercises, our leader instructed us to lie on our backs for a laughter meditation. >>



«I settled into a spot on the lawn, sat in sukhasana (easy, cross-legged pose) and assumed the countenance of a meditating yogi. Soon there was a snicker to my left and a giggle to my right. Another woman snorted in front of me. I remained perfectly quiet, reminding myself that Paramahansa Yogananda had achieved nirvana despite a soccer game his schoolmates had started around him. Surely I, too, could find stillness amidst the guffaws.

When the hysterical laughter had reached a crescendo, I squinted through my lids. A woman winked at me, spread her arms wide, and began laughing freely. “What is going on?” I wondered. All around me, bodies were doubled over in laughter; men gripped the grass as they rolled and swayed with huge smiles, women leaned against one another and laughed till tears rolled down their cheeks. They had transcended any label that might have identified them: “senior citizen,” “workaholic,” “divorcee.” Everyone looked relaxed, vibrant, and beautifully free. I couldn’t help but smile and share in their joy.

After our “meditation” we were instructed to breathe, ground ourselves, and relax for a few minutes. We were invited to sit up slowly and form a circle. “Position one hand in the grass and stretch the other up towards the sky,” our leader encouraged. “Feel energy rush through the earth

and into your body. Now share this positivity. Let it pass through your outstretched arm.”

He continued, “One of the central goals of Laughter Yoga is to promote world peace. Let your laughter be a peaceful practice.” I was in the midst of a group of people who truly believed that laughter could achieve world peace. For the first time that day, I felt sure I was in the right place.

Dr. Madan Kataria joined us in Oceanside that weekend in 2006. The originator of this practice, Dr. Kataria spoke to us about how it all began. In 1995, he was working full-time as a medical doctor in Mumbai, India, and had started a small publication for his patients. In one issue, he took his inspiration from Reader’s Digest’s, “Laughter is the Best Medicine” page to write an article about the benefits of laughing. Dr. Kataria came across the scant information available on the subject, including Norman Cousins’s *Anatomy of an Illness*. It occurred to him that he could start a laughter club of his own and put the theory into practice.

The next morning, Dr. Kataria visited the park close to his home, knowing the grass would be filled with locals getting their daily exercise before the start of the business day. He asked several friends and his wife, Madhuri, to tell jokes. Dr. Kataria noticed that a curious thing happened when his small group of five laughed out loud: passers-by, even though they had not heard the

punch line smiled—and many of them laughed. “Laughter is contagious!” he declared and he asked his group to meet again the next day in the same spot. “Bring some more jokes and a few friends, too.”

Within a few weeks, the group members, jokes, and laughs had all multiplied. But not everyone was pleased. A woman approached Dr. Kataria after the session to complain, “These jokes are becoming quite offensive! I won’t be coming back to this Laughter Club of yours – in fact my husband won’t be coming back either and neither will our son!” Dr. Kataria reassured her that the next day would be different. There would be no joke telling. She conceded and said they’d return and Dr. Kataria was left wondering what to do.

Overnight, he had a breakthrough. They would skip the humor and head straight to the laughter.

When the group arrived in the park, he introduced them to simple exercises such as “Namaste Laughter” in which participants were to make eye contact as they greeted one another with, “Namaste,” and simply add on a simulated laugh. They quickly found that genuine laughter started to flow. More exercises were suggested; Cell Phone Laughter, Drinking Lassi Laughter, Cleaning Dishes Laughter and more. A movement had begun.

Today, thousands of Laughter Clubs meet all over the world from Argentina to Zimbabwe with the same mission: to release stress and spread peace through laughter. Typical laughter sessions are forty-five minutes in length and include gentle stretches and movements; no yoga mat is required and participants can dress however they like. People practice varied interactive group games that encourage deep exhalations through laughter interspersed with moments to breathe and play. Sessions end with a laughter meditation, guided relaxation, and affirmations. Finally, students take a moment to talk about the experience and thank one another.

When I was in Pune, India, I visited a Laughter Club and noticed that they included a formalized pranayama practice. “Brahmari!” the leader shouted, and everyone covered their ears and began to exhale with a hum. Because of their shared cultural knowledge base, it worked easily. With groups outside of India, I explain the breathing techniques and keep them simple.

There are numerous health benefits associated with practicing laughter regularly. Scientists have documented dilation of blood vessels during laughter and concluded that it is conducive to maintaining heart and circulatory system health. Studies show that laughing even helps women un-

I found myself surrounded by childlike adults who were eager to play, laugh and move.



dergoing in vitro fertilization treatments to conceive. Endorphins are released when one practices sustained laughing – even when it is only the mechanics of laughter.

Try this simple exercise the next time you feel like boosting your own sense of well-being. Smile with your eyes, relax your jaw and simply repeat, “Ha, ha, ha!” for twenty seconds. In a surprisingly short period of time the simulated laugh will transition into a genuine laugh and you will have difficulty knowing exactly where and when things shifted.

This is the yoga of this body-led practice. Our bodies love laughter and willingly create the chemistry to heal – even when our minds “aren’t in the mood.”

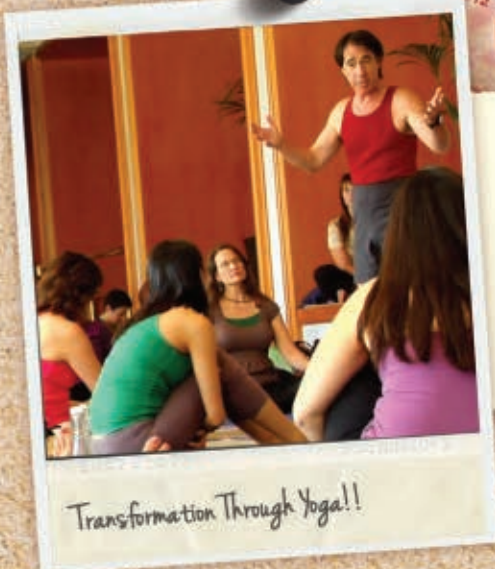
Join a session and discover the “weeee!” factor of the practice. This is the reason so many return to Laughter Yoga again and again. In this practice a safe space is created where unwanted and unneeded stress can be lifted. Laughter Yoga also offers practitioners the opportunity to halt the chatter of the mind and intellect; when this ceases there are moments of unutterable joy. Hmm, that sounds a lot like Samadhi, doesn’t it?

Hilary Kimblin Licht is the founder of Peace Tree Healing, dedicated to planting seeds of joy through a holistic approach to yoga, Ayurveda, birth and bodywork. Peacetreehealing.com

Hilary Kimblin Licht is currently conducting a study at the University of Southern California through the Neurology Department on the effects of Laughter Yoga with chronic headache and migraine sufferers. To qualify for this study, individuals must regularly experience fifteen or more headache days per month. So far participants are offering positive feedback, and the study is enrolling more people now. Please contact her at Hilary@peacetreehealing.com for more details.

Yoga Alliance Leadership Conference

Oct 25-28

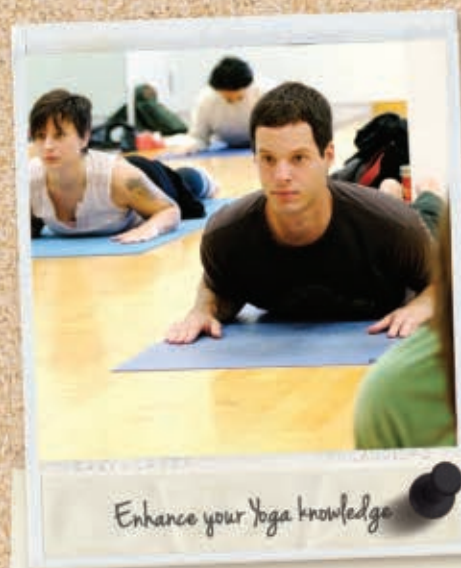


The Yoga Alliance Leadership Conference, designed by and for Yoga teachers, offers a chance for participants to invigorate a lifelong study of Yoga in a warm and collaborative environment. The three keynote speakers – Larry Payne, Cora Wen and Nikki Myers – will address the theme “Transformation through Yoga” along with 30 workshops, 10 practice sessions, community meals, kirtan, music, and more.

Location: Indian Wells, CA. Conference.yogaalliance.org

Yoga Serves

A day of wellness in community, Oct 27



Chris Chapple, Doshi Professor of Indic and Comparative Theology at LMU, provides the opening remarks for this free Yoga Day on campus. The day includes Yoga classes focused on a variety of real-world situations: improving focus and test-taking, enhancing education, actors, medical needs, midlife. Talks include the medical benefits of yoga and yoga in schools. The day concludes with dinner and a concert.

Location: Loyola Marymount University
Bellarmine.lmu.edu

Ojai Yoga Crib

Oct 25-28



The 10th Anniversary of this annual intimate celebration of Yoga includes yoga classes, lectures, meditations, workshops, intensives, kirtan, and great food in scenic settings throughout the Ojai Valley. Infuse practice with deep inspiration in this weekend immersive experience. Teachers include: Erich Schiffmann, Saul David Raye, Dana Flynn, Patricia Sullivan, Cyndi Lee, Uma Goswami, Jason Crandell, Noah Maze, Scott Blossom, Elena Brower, Chandra Easton, Laura Tyree, John Hickey, Sean Johnson, Ravi Ravindra, and Kira Ryder.



Location: At Lulu Bandha's and around the town of Ojai
Ojaiyogacrib.com



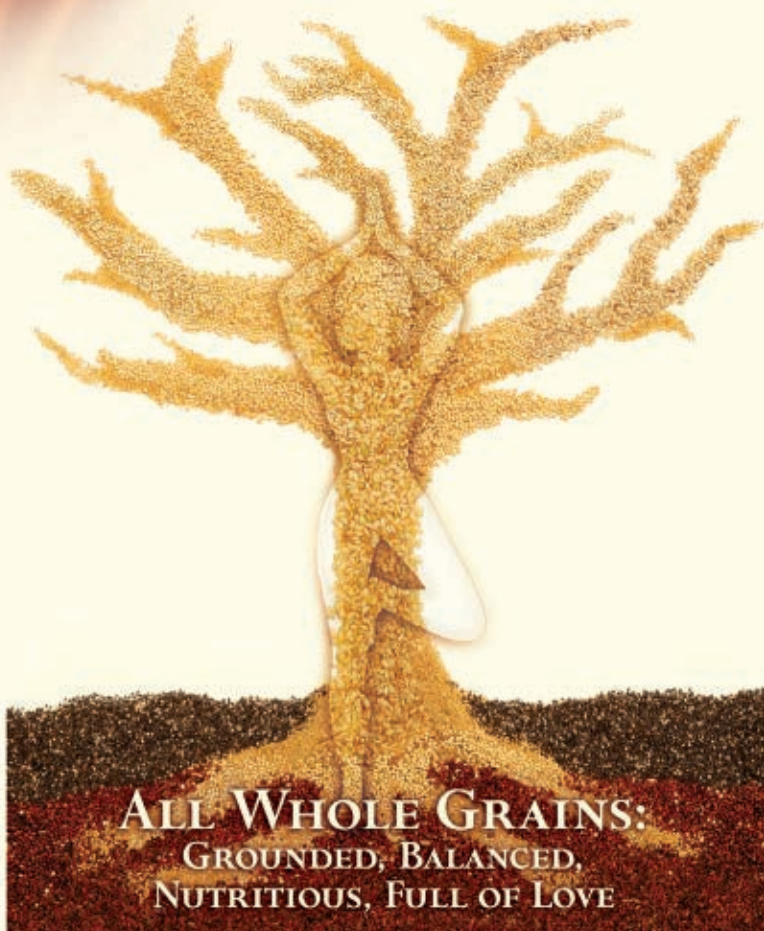
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Subtle Shakti

MEDITATION BY DR. LORIN ROCHE

A meditation on quiet healing Shakti from The Radiance Sutras,
a new translation of the vijnana bhairava tantra

Shakti is power in all forms, and in Sanskrit is defined as “energy, strength, might, capability, skill, effectiveness, and regal power.” Shakti is the energy or active power of the divine. She is the goddess, the feminine aspect of the divine. She is the power of generation and creativity. She is also the power in words, the energy of mantras. She is the creative power of imagination. Shakti is pranashakti, the life force expressing herself as the flow of energy through the body. Shakti is Mother Nature.

Let’s celebrate the quiet aspects of shakti that invite us into the silent depths and heal us from the world’s noise. In meditation, we get a chance to delight in the quiet flow of shakti. The techniques let us revel in the subtle rejuvenation of pranashakti bubbling up from Being. One of the sacred functions of meditation is to be a place and time in which we let nature heal our wounds, massage our nerves with the ointment of the life force, and revive our spirits.

The Vijnana Bhairava Tantra describes 112 yuktis or yoga meditation practices, and each plays with shakti in a different way. Here is the 32nd:

*Strong or soft, wild or serene,
Whenever breath is flowing there is song.*

Inspiration moves

Across the delicate membranes of your inner temple —

Touching the spaces behind the face,

Singing in the throat,

Dancing spirals in the sanctuary of the heart.

Savoring these energies of life is a practice.

Delighting in subtle harmonies, a moment may come

When you are giddy, lightheaded,

You just want to lie down.

This is a doorway. Surrender.

Fall into the wide open embrace of life.

You are the instrument breath is playing.

All the meditations you have ever loved

Are vibrating in this luxurious hum,

Continuing even in sleep and dreams.

This is your school. Just you and infinity.

The texture of the self is untamed freedom.

पीनां च दुर्बलां शक्तिं ध्यात्वा द्वादशगोचरे ।
प्रविश्य हृदये ध्यायन्मुक्तः स्वातन्त्र्यमाप्नुयात् ॥

pinām ca durbalām śaktim
dhyātvā dvādaśagocare
praviśya hṛdaye dhyāyan
muktaḥ svātantryam āpnuyāt

This verse is 32 syllables, each one coded with lots of info. Sanskrit is polysemous - each word and phrase can have many meanings. This is because back in the days before iPhones, people had to memorize things.

They were texting the future, playfully packing as many images into each syllable as possible, because it helped with memorization. If your eyes glaze over when reading the definitions, don't worry - the text is supposed to have so many layers of meaning that you can chant it every day for years and keep on discovering new puns, implications, and nuances.

Pinam ca durbalam - "with sound slowly," breathing in and out with sound.* (also, pina - strong, muscular, beefy, full, fat, luxuriant; and durbala - of little strength, thin, a slender waist, a lean cow, scanty, small, little.)

Shakti - the power of life flowing in your being.

Dhyatva - having meditated.

Dvadasa-gocare - literally "in the range of twelve." This is tantric code, referring to many little places in and around the body where the flow of shakti becomes within the range of the senses, and implies the field of sensual food on which the senses graze.**

Pravesa - entering, entrance, door, intentness on an object, engaging closely in a pursuit or purpose.

Hridaya - heart (or region of the heart as the seat of feelings and sensations), soul, mind (as the center of mental operations); the heart or interior of the body, the heart or center or core or essence or best or dearest or most secret part of anything. True or divine knowledge, the veda. Science.

Dhyana - meditation, thought, reflection, especially profound and abstract religious meditation, mental representation of the personal attributes of a deity, insensibility, dullness. From the root dhi - to perceive, think, reflect.

Mukta - loosened, set free, relaxed, open, liberated, delivered, emancipated, the spirit released from corporeal existence.

Svatantra - independence, self-will, freedom, "one's own system or school," "one's own army," free, uncontrolled, full grown.

Apnuyat - attains.

A simple meaning of this verse is that when you have been practicing yoga and meditation, there will be times when you get sort of dizzy - you just can't practice any more and you have to lie down. This is not failure. This is a doorway opening. Give in to the urge to lie down and let the meditation continue by itself in sacred sleep. It is as if the body has become meditation, you are flowing with shakti, and as you melt into shakti, you fall into freedom and your own free spirit.

Breathing is our primary food. We breathe in and out maybe 17,000 - 22,000 times a day - thousands of gallons of air. Babies may breathe over 40,000 times a day. When we attend to the flow of breath, the whole point is to be well-fed on all levels - with physical air and with the subtle energies that flow into our bodies and souls from the universe around. We are enjoying life as we take pleasure in feeding on air. All our senses, especially touch, hearing, and subtle taste and smell, are to be alert to the delight of exchanging substance with the universe. When you practice meditation and engage with shakti in any of her forms, there will come a time when your body is sufficiently tuned that shakti will invite you to let her take over: "Lie down on my healing table and let me work on you. Let me carry you for a while. Just doze while I recharge you with the essence of vitality. Then you can rise up renewed and jump into life again."

Lorin Roche began practicing with the vijnana bhairava tantra in 1968 and it has been a love affair ever since. He is the author of *The Radiance Sutras*, *Meditation Made Easy* (Harper 1998), and *Meditation Secrets for Women* (Harper 2001) (written with his wild Shakti wife Camille Maurine). He has a Ph.D. from the University of California at Irvine in Social Science, where he studied the language yogis and meditators develop to describe their inner experiences. Lorin does one-to-one coaching and trains meditation teachers. Visit lorinroche.com to order copies of *The Radiance Sutras*.

Come to Esalen December 14-16 for a joyous weekend of immersion in *The Radiance Sutras* with Dr. Lorin Roche and Camille Maurine. Reservations: (831) 667-3005, or visit www.Esalen.org.

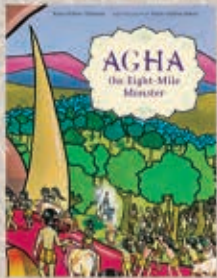
*Vijnana Bhairava: The Manual for Self-Realization, revealed by Swami Lakshmanjoo, edited by John Hughes, Universal Shaiva Fellowship. (The word "giddy," used above, comes from Lakshmanjoo. According to some etymologies, giddy is from "goddy," or "possessed by God, possessed by the divine.")

**Sri Vijnana Bhairava Tantra, Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati, Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar, India, 2003.



MANDALA EARTH

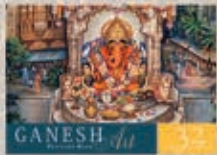
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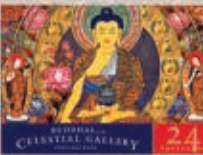
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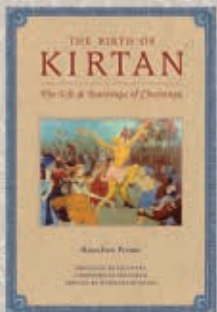
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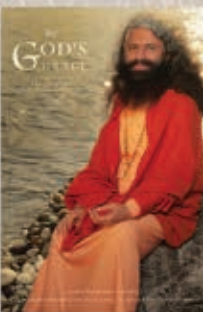
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YOGA SESSIONS: HANG WITH ANGELS /CD

BY MASOOD ALI KAHN

White Swan Records

I miss spending afternoons perusing the CD listening booths of my local music store – before the days of single track downloading, iTunes playlists, and Pandora. I still love the feeling of opening a CD package, vibing on the liner art and experiencing the musical journey as the artist intended. So when Masood Ali Khan handed me his new Yoga Sessions: Hang with Angels CD, I gave it a listen and found myself caught in a weave of entrancing hang drum rhythms, heart-arousing melodies, meditative mantra, and world spice.

Masood's elegant fusion of sensual hang drum (a steel percussive instrument that produces subtle tones) and haunting Eastern melodic lines with flights of flute, violin, harp, electric guitar, and even an occasional muted trumpet, seamlessly accompany the eleven mantras sung by Masood and a phenomenal compilation of female vocalists. From Masood and Monica Page's evocative vocals in *Radhe Govinda* to Sheela Bringi's otherworldly voice on *Govinda Gopala*, Lisbeth Scott's *Gayatri Mantra* to Suzanne Sterling's *Dharma Wheel*, Radha's *Jai Bhagavan*, and Terra Gold's *Gaté Gaté*, Hang with Angels is a sonic elixir to open the heart and transform any yoga class or any environment into a healing ritual space where our velocity melts into a vast and sacred stillness.

This exquisite offering beckons one to taste the nectar produced when listener, musician, music, and mantra unite.

Drink slowly.

Reviewed by **Micheline Berry** who leads integrative Yoga arts retreats, teacher trainings, and workshops:
Michelineberry.com



BHAKTI FESTIVAL: BE IN THE BHAV /CD

BY VARIOUS ARTISTS

White Swan Records

Within the Bhakti Yoga community, the calendar year is now measured from one Bhakti Fest to the next when friends and family from all parts of the world join together in elated sound and celebration at this epic yoga and kirtan festival.

With the release of the festival's first-ever compilation album, you no longer have to wait to physically attend the celebration in Joshua Tree – the euphoric sounds of Bhakti Fest are now accessible all year. And the album's proceeds benefit the festival charities.

The two disc set features performances from a selection of great kirtan artists whose voices and devotion enrapture our ears and our hearts. With live chants from Jai Uttal, C.C. White, David Newman, Govindas & Radha, Prema Hara, The Mayapuris, and Sita & the Hanumen, the song list is as unmatched as the festival's guest list.

C.C. White's Reggae-style "Maha Mantra" is a soulful modern twist on the timeless mantra, while the hauntingly beautiful wails from Sean Johnson & The Wild Lotus Band on "Om Namah Shivaya" leave you wanting more.

In the Bhakti tradition, ajapa-japa, the practice of chanting without mental effort or ritual protocol, is the goal -- and thanks to this special compilation, the poetic melodies and transcendental mantras on Bhakti Fest's album will be sure to continually repeat in your mind and elevate your spirit.

Bhakti Fest's album is available on
Whiteswanrecords.com

Reviewed by **Vanessa Harris**, the editorial coordinator at Bliss Network



THE ULTIMATE YOGI /DVD

WITH TRAVIS ELLIOT

Udaya Entertainment

"Are you ready?" With this question Travis Elliot sets the transformational tone for his recently released Yoga training program intended to turn anyone ready for the challenge into The Ultimate Yogi. More than just a Yoga DVD, The Ultimate Yogi is a comprehensive wellness and fitness program for anyone ready to transform their life from the inside out.

With the understanding that it takes time to promote lasting change within the body, The Ultimate Yogi is a 108-day journey that will push you to your physical limits and beyond. The 12 disc set includes 14 themed Yoga classes, a training guide, a program wall calendar, a nutrition plan, and a bonus short film.

Travis' teaching style is intensely dynamic, meditative, and transforming. His objective for The Ultimate Yogi is to provide students with the means to create everlasting strength, flexibility, weight loss, confidence, and balance. The plan he offers is based on practicing one hour of yoga a day, making some common sense dietary changes, and developing meditation techniques. Much like he teaches in his Power Yoga studio classes, each of the Yoga classes offered on the DVD program are creatively sequenced to challenge the expert and encourage the beginner. The Ultimate Yogi website (theultimateyogi.com) provides numerous additional resources including recipes, true stories by many who have already taken the path towards becoming Ultimate Yogis, and additional insightful videos.

Reviewed by **Rachael Cleghorn** maintains a bodywork practice in San Francisco and is always open to receiving Yogi-minded clientel. HealThySelfBodywork.com



VINYASA YOGA /DVD

WITH DANIEL OVERBERGER

Black Market Yoga

Filmed live in Runyon Canyon, Daniel Overberger's DVD will make you feel nostalgic for LA, even if you've never left town. This classic vinyasa practice is set in a palm-tree-encircled knoll on one of those perfectly sunny LA days that we city dwellers can sometimes take for granted.

The sequence is a well-rounded 60-minute flow including sun salutations, standing poses, hip openers, back bends, forward folds, and brief exploration of pranayama, or breath techniques. In lieu of demonstrations, Overberger leads students through the poses with the melodic connection of his physical and vocal mannerisms, acting out his intention with smooth inflections and gesticulations. Overberger's voice embodies an essential flavor of Los Angeles, and when combined with his overall appearance and demeanor, he is reminiscent of a self-realized rock star.

Shot by Lawrence Elbert, the hand-held camera work gives the DVD an intimate feel, avoiding the over-produced quality of many fitness and wellness programs. However, in keeping with the LA setting, the students radiate the groomed energy of perfectly poised yoga models. Gentle music accompanies the fluid instruction and graceful guidance providing an angelic DVD practice to enjoy even if we are far away from this city we love.

Reviewed by **Beth Prandini**, a Los Angeles-based yoga teacher and lover of all things media. Bethprandiniyoga.com

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Maria Garre, ERYT 500

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The Light in me
sees the Light in you,
and recognizes
the source of this Light
to be the Same

.....

We are all connected

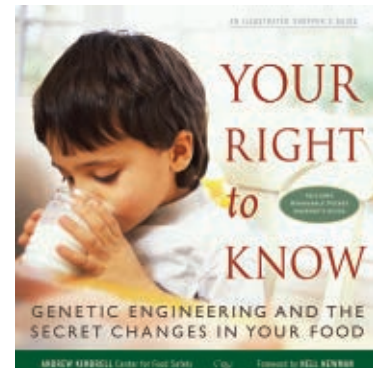
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YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW /BOOK

BY ANDREW KIMBRELL

Earth Aware Editions/Mandala Publishing

Are you shopping in the dark?

This question is posed to the reader in *Your Right to Know, Genetic Engineering and the Secret Changes in Your Food*. Apparently, most of us are.

Informative yet frightening, *Right to Know* is must-read comprehensive guide detailing how genetically engineered foods are impacting our everyday lives. Today an estimated 52% of all corn, 87% of all soy, and 79% of all cotton grown in the US is genetically engineered, according to statistics Kimbrell cites. Even many types of fish, often touted as a healthy food, are loaded with growth hormones.

Center for Food Safety Director Kimbrell details how big corporations like Monsanto, Dow, and Bayer are behind the push to grow our food quickly and cheaply, but with a hidden price.

This detailed book covers issues such as personal health and the ecological impacts of GMO foods. Kimbrell includes maps and charts of genetically modified crops, a list of companies that produce GMO foods, the revolving door between policy makers and industry lobbyists, and the future of farming. Also featured are resources for gardeners and pocket super-market shoppers' guides.

Your Right to Know is an educational coffee table book for families and foodies - full of informative pictures, interesting facts, and inspirational quotes such as "Think Globally, Buy Locally." Educate yourself and read this book.

Reviewed by **Beth Shaw**, the President and Founder of YogaFit, an international yoga and mind-body fitness school. YogaFit.com



Love Duets Across Civilizations

**Mahsa Vahdat and
Mighty Sam McClain**

Thursday, November 8, 8:00 p.m.

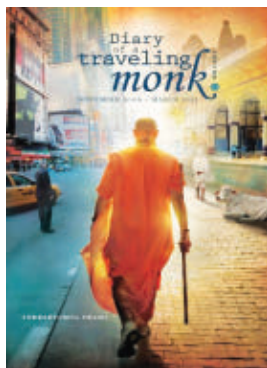
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West Coast premiere! Acclaimed Persian singer **Mahsa Vahdat** and American soul/blues master **Mighty Sam McClain** come together for an achingly beautiful project blending American blues with Persian music. This one-of-a-kind collaboration showcases love duets that gracefully intertwine English and Farsi lyrics. Presented as the first in the Skirball's new concert series, *Journeys and Encounters*, presenting surprising collaborations between musicians of diverse genres.

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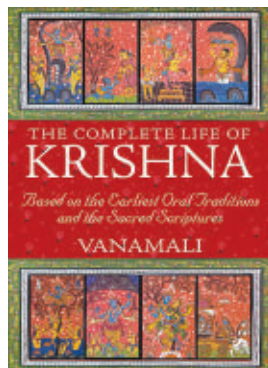


DIARY OF A TRAVELING MONK VOLUME XI /BOOK

BY INDRADYUMNA SWAMI
Torchlight Publishing Inc.

“Preach boldly and have faith in the Holy Names!” were personal directions Swami Prabhupada, founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, gave to HH Indradyumna Swami. Following these instructions, Indradyumna Swami entered the renounced order of sannyasa and has been responsible for spreading Krishna Consciousness around the world. From coordinating the annual Festival of India tour in Poland, participating in Europe’s largest music festival, the Przystanek Woodstock, and heading several of Food for Life’s international relief efforts, Indradyumna Swami has faithfully served in making the nama-sankirtan (chanting of the Holy names) movement literally available to all.

Living a life less ordinary, Indradyumna Swami has narrated his journeys in his *Diary of a Traveling Monk* series. Recently releasing the highly-anticipated Volume XI of the chronicle, Indradyumna Swami takes us along with him from Poland, to Australia, to his beloved home in Vrindavana, and every flight in between. From blasting MC Yogi’s song *Krsna Love* at the closing ceremony of a Melbourne festival to chanting while traversing over eight kilometers of Russian beachfront, the experiences he recorded are as colorful as a Devotee’s dancing sarees. Intertwined with Vedic scripture and personal experience of the Spiritual Master, the diaries serve as an example of how spirituality can be found in every material situation. Known for his sweetly-sung kirtan, the *Diary of a Traveling Monk* series gives us a more personal look into adventurous and devoted voice of HH Indradyumna Swami.



THE COMPLETE LIFE OF KRISHNA /BOOK

BY VANAMALI
Inner Traditions

Some may find him in temples small and large, others may sense him in Vrindavan, while many say he dwells in the hearts of all. Now, Lord Krishna lives and dances throughout the pages of Vanamali’s recently released biography: *The Complete Life of Krishna*.

Drawing from the sacred scriptures of the Bhagavad Purana, the Mahabharata, and the Bhagavad Gita, Vanamali shares the many layers of Krishna, leaving one awestruck to find that the Guru from the Bhagavad Gita is the same being as devoted lover of Radha as well as the young prankster known as Gopala. By exposing the many essences and pastimes of Krishna, *The Complete Life of Krishna* provides numerous meditations on the omnipotence of God. Through Krishna’s words spoken some 5,000 years ago, one finds ways to incorporate his timeless teachings to our modern-day lives.

Vanamali has written seven books on the gods of the Hindu pantheon, including Hanuman, Shakti, and The Song of Rama. One can sense Vanamali’s lifelong devotion throughout the pages of her works. Historians will appreciate the close attention paid in giving extensive evidence of Krishna’s existence as well as research on the tribulations of keeping Krishna’s tradition alive. Whether you worship him as a friend, beloved, father, or you are meeting him for the first time, *The Complete Life of Krishna* will undoubtedly draw you closer to the “Mahayogi.”

Both reviewed by **Vanessa Harris**, the editorial coordinator at Bliss Network

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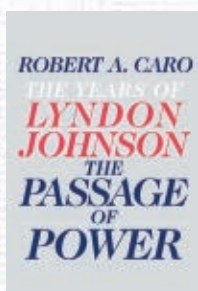
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ON MY NIGHTSTAND

congressman tim ryan

The stereotype of members of Congress doesn't necessarily include a regular meditation practice. But Representative Tim Ryan not only invites colleagues to meditate with him, he believes so strongly in the practice that he wrote *The Mindful Nation* about the importance of mindfulness to create positive change.

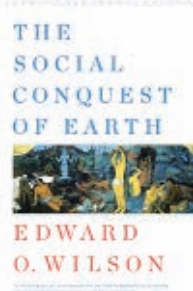


THE PASSAGE OF POWER

BY ROBERT CARO

I like to have multiple books going at one time. One I am currently reading is *The Passage of Power* by Robert Caro, which chronicles Lyndon Johnson's career from 1958-1964. Johnson's interactions with President Kennedy and RFK were amazingly complex and multi-dimensional.

The insider's view of the strategy and tactics leading up to the convention reads like a suspenseful Tom Clancy novel. *Passage* clearly highlights the difficulties and challenges of accumulating and holding on to power.

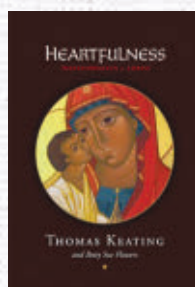


THE SOCIAL CONQUEST OF EARTH

BY EDWARD O. WILSON

The Social Conquest of Earth by Edward O. Wilson examines how our social relationships have been shaped by our evolution, environment, and circumstances from our beginnings. It is fascinating to see how our needs for basic survival created behaviors that continue today – some good, some not so helpful. Wilson's book is thought-provoking in that

it highlights how essential cooperation is to survival and how this can challenge us to reevaluate how Darwin's survival of the fittest has been hijacked by certain segments of society.



HEARTFULNESS

BY FATHER THOMAS KEATING

I'm also currently reading and enjoying *Heartfulness* by Father Thomas Keating. Father Keating is well-known for his wisdom and teachings of Centering Prayer, a Christian meditation practice. *Heartfulness* teaches us

that sin is simply missing the mark and is to be corrected through experience, teaching, and understanding. He eloquently speaks about how depression, anxiety, and loneliness come from us not feeling connected to God and the basic goodness of our world. Any Catholic who is interested in finding a deeper experience of life should read this book.

Representative Tim Ryan, mindfulness advocate, represents the 17th district in Northeast Ohio, which includes Youngstown, Akron and Alliance. He is the author of *A Mindful Nation*, published by Hay House. Timryan.house.gov



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GMOS: SERVING UP TOXINS

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BY RED JEN FORD



Mural by WERC, VYAL, & Voice of Art.
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«When we eat packaged and processed foods, most of the time they come with a “cide” of something we did not order, such as pesticides, herbicides and insecticides. In addition to these ‘cides, we now have an increasing number of genetically modified organisms, or GMOs, in the food supply. In fact, according to NonGMOProject.org, Dr. Oz and others, as much as 80 percent of conventional, non-organic packaged, and processed foods sold in the United States today contain GMOs, foods that have been engineered with foreign DNA from other organisms.

One of the reasons that a plant may be genetically modified is to generate its own insecticide or to tolerate the heavy spraying of herbicides like the weed killer, Roundup, as is the case with so-called “Roundup Ready” crops. Use of these chemicals allows farmers to save on labor costs and is supposed to increase crop yields; however, the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) reported in an April 2009 press release that “genetic engineering has failed to significantly boost U.S. crop yields despite biotech industry claims.”

In a 2004 interview with Sierra Magazine, Michael Pollan, food journalist and author of *The Botany of Desire*, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, and *In Defense of Food: An Eater’s Manifesto* stated, “GMOs have mainly been a way to sell more Roundup herbicide.” In a 2009 interview at the Long Now Foundation, Pollan stated further that genetic engineering is increasing the problem of monocultures and their related use of pesticides to defend them. The largest of these monoculture crops are corn, soy, cotton, and canola; coincidentally, all are grown with greater than 85 percent genetically engineered organisms and are specifically designed to produce or withstand the heavy use of ‘cides.

Given the prevalence of GMOs in our food system and their inherent use of ‘cides, shouldn’t we wonder what the health and environmental impacts of this grand science experiment are? The biggest problem in answering this question is that biotech companies like Monsanto own the intellectual property rights to the GMOs, and so in order to study them, independent scientists are required to obtain written permission from Monsanto to perform the studies and get their prior approval before publishing them (Pollan 2009). Further, since the USDA considers GMOs “substantially equivalent” to conventionally-grown crops, the USDA does not require safety studies of GMOs.

Opponents of genetic engineering like the American Academy of Environmental Medicine (AAEM)

suggest on their website and in the position paper at aaemonline.org/gmopost.html that the specific health risks of GMOs include endocrine disruption, organ damage, decreased fertility and reproductive disorders, immunosuppression, increased allergies, inflammation and even accelerated aging. Additionally, in his book, *Genetic Roulette: The Documented Health Risks of Genetically Engineered Foods*, Jeffrey M. Smith, director of the Institute for Responsible Technology, documents at least 65 serious health risks from GM food products, including toxic and allergic reactions in humans and sick and sterile livestock.

The World Health Organization reports in “20 Questions on Genetically Modified Foods” that the three main issues with GMOs are tendencies to provoke allergic reaction (allergenicity), gene transfer to cells of the body or to bacteria in the gastrointestinal tract, and outcrossing – the “movement of genes from GM plants into conventional crops or related species in the wild.” >>



HOW TO AVOID GMOS WHEN EATING OUT?

According to Jeffrey Smith, follow these recommendations to go GMO-free when visiting a restaurant:

- ▶ Choose establishments that cook from scratch, rather than those serving a lot of fast or processed foods. Processed foods contain GM ingredients in almost every item.
- ▶ Consult the list of at-risk ingredients on the Non-GMO shopping guide and avoid them. These include: derivatives of soy, corn, cottonseed oil, canola oil, sugar beets, zucchini, yellow squash.
- ▶ Many at-risk ingredients are obvious, such as: corn, zucchini, yellow squash, tofu, sugar, and aspartame.
- ▶ Choose pure cane sugar over other varieties of packaged or processed sugar.
- ▶ Hidden ingredients or those less visible include cooking oils (cottonseed, corn, and canola oils are frequently GM).
- ▶ Ask what kind of oil the kitchen uses. If they say they cook with olive oil, make sure it is a pure oil, and not a blend with canola oil (a common practice).
- ▶ Ask if your dish can be made with olive oil or other alternative oil.

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Open House, Fund Raiser & Community Celebration

Sunday, December 2
7am - 10pm

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The four most common crops grown in the USA today are common GMOs: corn, soybeans, canola, and cotton. According to the Center for Food Safety, up to 85 percent of all corn and 91% of all soy grown in the United States is genetically engineered.

« While studies conducted specifically on GMOs in the United States are few, a European analysis of nineteen studies conducted on mammals fed commercialized genetically modified soybean and corn over the course of ninety days showed significant dysfunction in the liver and kidneys and raised the question of how the impact could worsen over longer-term consumption.

Other studies have indicated that GMO crops grown in fields treated with Roundup leave behind residue of Roundup's active ingredient, glyphosate, which has been recently linked to decreasing good bacteria in the gut and, in rats, lowering testosterone levels and causing infertility and birth defects. In addition, Mother Earth News reported in 2005 that "scientific studies link Roundup (glyphosate), the most widely used herbicide in the world, to a host of health risks, such as cancer, miscarriages and disruption of human sex hormones." Sadly, glyphosate is so prevalent that in 2011, the U.S. Geological Survey documented it not only in rain and the Mississippi River watershed, but also in the air and streams, indicating "transport from its point of use into the broader environment." Further, increasing the use of GMO crops has increased the use of weed-killing chemicals by hundreds of millions of pounds since their introduction. According to Organic Center chief scientist Dr. Charles Benbrook at UCS, "383 million additional pounds of herbicides have been used on Genetically Engineered (GE) crops since 1996, compared to what likely would have been used if GE crops had been replaced by conventional, Non-GE varieties. Forty-six percent of the total increase occurred in the last two years studied (2007 and 2008)." Yet, the USDA has been essentially silent on the impacts of GE crops on pesticide use. And now, "super weeds" have flourished which are becoming resistant to the chemicals, and in turn, have sparked the need for harsher herbicides and therefore greater risks to farm workers, consumers and the environment.

The four most common crops grown in the United States today are common GMOs: corn, soybeans, canola, and cotton. According to the Center for Food Safety, up to 85 percent of all corn and 91 percent of all soy grown in the United States is genetically engineered. These commodity crops are used as the primary feed for conventional livestock and

are found in processed foods such as cereals, baby foods, breads, chips, sodas, vegetarian meat substitutes, and a long list of other products not labeled organic.

With the increase of GMO crops, one of the pressing issues is the lack of labeling. Whether we agree with the health and environmental risks of GMOs, shouldn't we at least have the option to make a choice? Unfortunately, neither the FDA nor USDA requires labeling even though many surveys and polls have shown that most Americans indicate they want to know if they are eating GMOs. (In an October 2010 study conducted by Thomson Reuters, "National Survey of Healthcare Consumers: Genetically Engineered Food," 93% of respondents said genetically engineered foods should be labeled.) Therefore, the onus is on the consumer to do the research.

Until GMOs are clearly labeled, here at least are some guidelines to help you avoid them and their 'cides:

Avoid Packaged/Processed Foods or Opt for Organic or Non-GMO Varieties.

- The most certain way to avoid GMOs in all foods and especially in prepared or packaged foods is to look for certified organic labeling. The USDA requires that certified organic products are not allowed to contain any GMOs. Purchase products labeled "100% organic," "organic," or "made with organic ingredients;" all ingredients in these products are not allowed to be produced from GMOs.
- Look for "Non-GMO" labeling (a newer option). Many companies are voluntarily labeling products Non-GMO or "made without genetically modified ingredients." »



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« Products labeled with the “Non-GMO Project Seal” have been subject to third party verification for compliance with Non-GMO Project standards for GMO avoidance.

- Avoid the Riskiest Ingredients. If organic or Non-GMO options are not available, scrutinize ingredient labels to avoid these foods that are likely GMOs:

Corn: corn flour, meal, oil, starch, gluten, and syrup; sweeteners such as fructose, dextrose, and glucose.

Soy: tofu, edamame, soy flour, lecithin, protein, isolate, and isoflavone; soybean oil and vegetable protein.

Papaya from Hawaii, yellow squash, zucchini, and beet sugar.

Oils: canola (sometimes labeled rape seed), vegetable and cottonseed oils

Pick your PLUs for produce: While most of our produce is free from genetic engineering, some varieties of zucchini and crook-neck squash are genetically modified, as well as some tomatoes and 50 percent of the papaya from Hawaii. When shopping for grocery store produce, read the PLU code on the attached sticker; a five-digit number starting with an 8 means that item was genetically engineered. For example, a GM vine ripe tomato would be labeled 84805.

Mind your Animal Products: When shopping for fish, choose wild varieties instead of farmed to avoid GMO feed. Be aware that because so-called “Frankenfish,” or salmon engineered to grow more quickly, may be approved soon. If you eat meat, look for 100 percent grass-fed animals to avoid GM feed. Many conventionally raised dairy cows are fed with GM grains and are treated with the genetically engineered hormone rBGH, (also called rBST) to boost milk production. While rBGH-free labeling ensures growth hormones were not used, organic dairy products go one step further and ensure GM grains were not used as feed. Dairy products from pastured animals like sheep and goats are predominantly grass-fed, as well as being free from hormones, GM feed and antibiotics.

Aim for Cane (sugar that is): Much of our refined sugar now comes from GM beets (according to the Center for Food Safety, 95 percent of all sugar beets grown in the US are now genetically engineered).

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When eating sweets, chocolate, and candy, read ingredient lists and look for cane sugar, organic sugar, or evaporated cane juice.

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Are you feeling overwhelmed and wishing you had the right to know? Many countries already require such labeling or ban the use of GMO ingredients outright. Use your vote and your voice to protect the environment and your own health. Demand labeling of GMOs:

- ▶ Vote YES on Proposition 37 on the November ballot in California.
- ▶ Get educated and/or involved in California at Carighttoknow.org
- ▶ Not a resident of California, but still want to use your voice? Tell the FDA to label GMOs – go to Justlabelit.org to sign an online petition and make your voice heard.

Every bite we take is an opportunity to vote via our forks for a fairer food system. If you don't order or buy genetically modified products, producers will stop producing them and restaurants will stop buying them. Having the freedom to decide what we put in our bodies begins by being informed through responsible labeling.

Learn more in person!

Conscious Life Expo, Oct. 5-7.

GMO related events including film screenings, panel discussions, and sessions geared toward healthcare professionals.

Consciouslifeexpo.com

EcoSalon Wellness Open House,

The Green Lifestyle Film Festival, Oct. 11.

Including, speakers, food tastings, wellness practitioners, a screening of Jeffrey Smith's film *Genetic Roulette* and a keynote by attorney and Alliance for Bio-Integrity founder Steve Drucker.

Greenlifestyles.org

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transformational film

YOGAWOMAN'S MESSAGE INSPIRES

BY FELICIA TOMASKO

IN LA THEATERS OCTOBER 26

Even in the midst of a class, practice is a solitary experience. After we have unrolled our mat, found the spot on the floor, and exchanged pleasantries or at least a smile with our mat-neighbors, our practice is silent, we move from asana to asana, for the most part, alone.

This is partly why the concept of the yoga community is one that is so meaningful to us. When we feel as though we are connected to something larger than ourselves, when we feel the interwoven relationships among students and teachers, practitioners and lineage holders, this strengthens our individual practice.

One of the ways in which we have the opportunity to both connect with and be inspired by others is through film. There is a growing body of documentary films focused on the yoga tradition and on our individual journeys along the adventurous path that is the yoga practice. On film, we have the opportunity to hear different voices and to hear how their practice may inspire and even inform our own. These films are available to watch in our homes – and on the big screen.

This month, the inspiring Yogawoman is making its theatrical cinematic debut on the big screen at the Laemmle Theatres in North Hollywood, Santa Monica, and Pasadena.

In Yogawoman, filmmakers Kate McIntyre Clere, Saraswati Clere, and Michael McIntyre traveled the world with cameras in hand to interview a long list of women who are now spearheading the practice of yoga into the 21st Century. For hundreds of years, the primary practitioners, the members of the kula, or community, were mostly men. The current wave of yoga students includes a radical group of women, and their take on the practice has shaped it in numerous ways. And they have inspired many.

This inspiration is something that reverberates beyond the theater. As Kate McIntyre reflects on how people around the world feel after seeing early screenings of Yogawoman, >>





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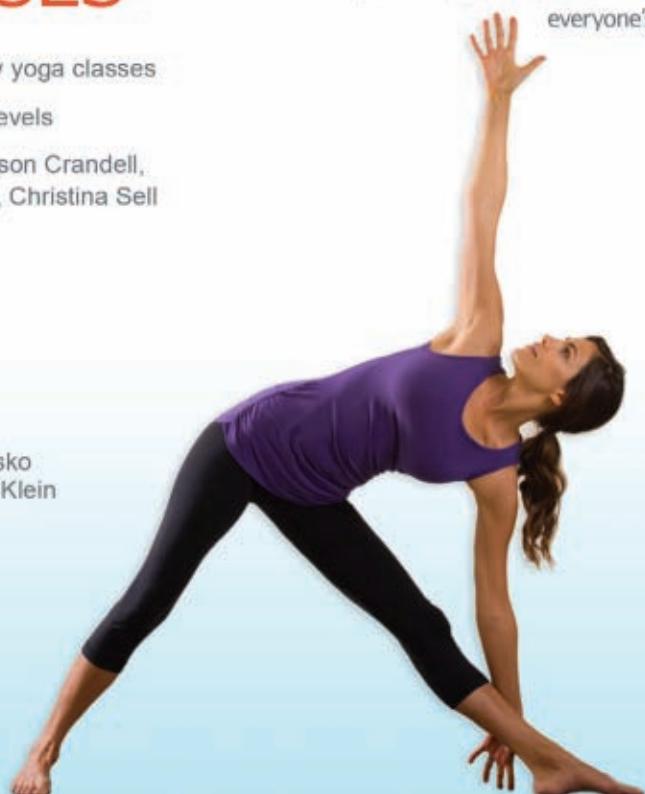
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Wed 4:30 - 5:30 pm - Yin/Hatha, Felicia Marie Tomasko
Wed 6:00 - 7:00 pm - Power Vinyasa Flow, Dice Iida-Klein
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transformational film

<< “Viewers now feel connected to this powerful community of women across the world, so when they return to their mats after seeing the film, they feel as if they are supported by and belong to a worldwide group of women.”

The influential women featured in *Yogawoman* have engaged in projects such as incorporating prenatal yoga into the system at Kaiser Permanente centers in Southern California. They have founded the non-profit Africa Yoga Project, teaching Africans to become yoga teachers and empowering their neighbors through the practice. They have participated in Off the Mat, Into the World's global seva challenges, raising money for life-changing projects around the world. They have traveled the world in service of yoga. They have taught yoga in detention centers and worked with youth at risk. And most importantly, they persevere in their daily practice of yoga, even in the face of adversity, illness, or challenge.

One of the powerful stories related to the film that has had a reverberating effect after the initial screenings of the documentary is that of cast member, yoga teacher, and cancer survivor Tari Prinster. Her own healing journey, her work with people with cancer, and her retreats were featured in the film. Since then, she has received numerous requests from across the country to share her perspective on the practice. Kate McIntyre Clere stated that the producers of *Yogawoman* have established a scholarship fund to support one woman each year to attend one of Tari's yoga retreats. Thus far, one scholarship has been awarded.

While *Yogawoman* follows a group of contemporary women through their practice, it can inspire anyone with its message of self-empowerment. If you need to introduce someone to the joys of yoga, this may be the film to see. And even if you see it alone, the next time you're on your mat, you may feel the presence of the rest of the community as you practice.

Yogawoman's Los Angeles theatrical release begins October 26. See it on the big screen at the Laemmle Theaters in Santa Monica, Pasadena and North Hollywood. Yogawoman.tv

Felicia Tomasko is the Editor-in-Chief of LAYoga.

Find Bliss

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Every day, we are cultivating balance at home and at work, alone and in relationship, all amidst the busy to-do list of our everyday lives. Find Bliss LA offers an inspirational array of practices, suggestions, and intention-setting exercises. This month, we focus on the spa experience.

~ Editor in Chief, Felicia Tomasko



10



12

FEATURES

16 spa at home

An Ayurvedic home spa ritual offers a powerful experience of rejuvenation.

BY CORINNA MAHARANI

20 creating your spa experience

Set your intentions before making an appointment to focus in on the healing experience you'd like to invite into your day.

BY ALISA SPIRIT OF THE WIND

DEPARTMENTS

4 INTENTIONS: co-create your world

BY ASHLEY WALSH

6 RELATIONSHIPS: putting the past to rest

BY CARRIE CROPLEY HUTCHINSON

8 CAREER PATH: practice at work

BY DAISY SWAN

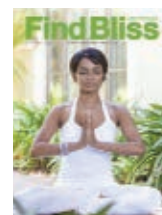
12 DAYTRIPPING: ojai valley

BY SUZA FRANCINA

10 SIGNATURE SPA TREATMENTS

24 SPA SPOTLIGHT

25 SPA LISTINGS



Actress, singer, mother, producer Kavi Ladnier sets her intention at Exhale Spa in Santa Monica.

PHOTO BY
DAVID YOUNG-WOLFF

how to co-create your world

A RECIPE CARD FOR MANIFESTING INTENTION

PART TWO: MAKE CLEAR YOUR INTENTION

BY ASHLEY WALSH

Last month we began a nine-part journey of setting intention with the first step being to focus ourselves. Once we have created the space for focus we move onto step two: Make clear your intention. Seek tangible results. This is important as the clearer your thoughts are, the easier they will manifest. To understand how to gain clarity within ourselves, we consider three essential conditions to achieving a clear state:

Do no Harm, Benefit Others

With deep emotion, be clear in your intention: Do No Harm and Benefit Others. This statement stems from the key concepts of numerous religious and spiritual traditions, but the true essence of this ideal is beyond any religious connotations. At the base of “Do No Harm, Benefit Others” is the concept of the ethic of reciprocity or the golden rule which states that the energy we transmit reflects the energy within ourselves. The aim is to promote love and happiness. Living in this manner has been shown in many scientific studies to help cultivate a greater experience of being centered, feeling calm, and an increase in clarity by quieting the noise and reducing the chaos around us.

Harmonize the energy –

Keep your thoughts focused on your intention in a way that is in harmony with the universal. Or in simpler terms -- go with the flow. This brings up the question: How do we know if we are going with the flow?

As we do any time we are searching for the right way, we look for a sign. Sometimes this notion of looking for a sign can seem arcane or mysterious. Yet when we examine these signs, we can start detecting patterns; Carl Jung explained this principle as synchronicity. He says, “There is an interconnection or unity of causally unrelated events, and thus postulates a unitary aspect of being which can very well be described as the ‘unus mundus’ [the concept of an underlying unified reality from which everything emerges and returns to].” When we get into the flow or the oneness of the universe, what we have created is a clear direction for our intentions.

“A vivid thought brings the power to paint it; and in proportion to the depth of its source is the force of its projections.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Connect with deep emotion –

Ignite your passion by creating a deep longing for your intention. Thought creates visualization, visualizing creates feeling; feeling creates the will to be. We can use William James’ model of “spotlight and zoom-lens” to clarify this process. Imagine a spotlight where your attention and focus are the rays of light spreading out in front of you. The zoom lens focuses in on the exact object you are

looking at, offering a clearer picture. You now have this object in sight but if you move back, you may lose focus. What is the remedy? What do you dial up to maintain focus? It is possible to increase the intensity of light or what we’d call your emotion or power of thought, allowing you to see more clearly with a brighter, more focused light.

To summarize step two, we can refer to this quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson, who stated, “A vivid thought brings the power to paint it; and in proportion to the depth of its source is the force of its projections.”



By adding the practice of clear thought to the lesson of step one (focus), we further develop our power of intention. Focus and clarity set the stage for step three—stay tuned for next month’s column. ☺

Ashley Walsh is the Vice President of Marketing for Intentional Chocolate™, her family’s business, at: intentionalchocolate.com. An integral part of their company is to help teach the science and spirituality of intention setting. She practices yoga, meditation and chocolate-eating daily as she believes all are vital to great health.

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putting the past to rest

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

BY DR. CARRIE HUTCHINSON

This season, as we pay homage to ghosts and goblins, we're faced with a variety of cultural interpretations of death. While some Americans celebrate the evil and sometimes terrifying side of the afterlife during Halloween, Mexicans and Mexican Americans indulge in a more upbeat celebration of the dead during Dia de Los Muertos. Signified by rainbow-colored candy skulls and dainty skeleton characters, Dia de Los Muertos is an opportunity to revel in the nostalgia of deceased loved ones and to share happy memories. As it turns out, these traditions may have a thing or two to teach us about lightening up when it comes to remembering situations of the past.



The way we view the past is a hot topic in relationship studies, and new findings reveal that how we process past relational events can even determine a relationship's future. Communication researcher John Gottman finds that couples who focus on negative events when talking about their relational history have a much greater likelihood of getting divorced. He believes that the way we think about the ghosts of the past determines how we feel and therefore behave toward our partners in the present. According to Gottman, focusing on negative memories can be the death of an interpersonal relationship.

Researchers have recently directed their spotlight onto a very specific detrimental habit known as rumination. Rumination is the continual thinking about an unpleasant event after it has occurred to such a degree that it distracts people from focusing on the present relationship. It is the doppelganger of reminiscing. Like a goblin that keeps jumping out from behind an unexpected corner, ruminating thoughts can pop up when we least expect them, causing us to lose focus in the moment and instead continuously relive a negative past event. The way we process memories is habitual, meaning that those of us who tend to

focus on the negative have some serious reprogramming to do if we want to exorcise the rumination demon. To help us in the process, researchers Garnefski and Kraaij have developed a measure of individual styles for responding to negative or stressful relational events which they call the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ). This measure asks respondents to rate on a scale of one to five the extent to which questions like these are true:

- When there is a difficult situation or event in one of my important relationships, I often revisit feelings about what happened.
- I tend to dwell upon the negative feelings that came from the experience.

Assessments like these can help determine the extent of an individual's problem with rumination. Perhaps you've already diagnosed yourself as a ruminator without an official test. Don't fret-- you are amongst the majority of the population, and there are some specific things you can do to shift the habit. The most effective method for counterbalancing negative thoughts about past experiences is referred to as positive reappraisal. Positive reappraisal is the process of perceiving negative experiences as opportunities for personal



growth and development. Researchers, theorists, and clinicians suggest that negative thought patterns can be reduced by replacing them with patterns of positive reappraisal, which include seeing the benefits of even difficult situations, and choosing to learn from negative experiences.

When you notice that your thoughts about someone feel ruminative, try and replace them with these recommended positive reappraisals:

- I can learn something new from the event.
- I can become a stronger person as a result of what happened.
- The situation also has its positive sides.

Over time, it's possible to actually retrain your brain to use positive reappraisal instead of its negative counterparts: rumination and blame. When you are able to effectively manage your emotions surrounding a past relational conflict or event, your present behavior will change for the better and your toxic patterns of thought will eventually be able to rest in peace. ♫

Dr. Carrie Hutchinson earned her PhD from the University of California Santa Barbara in Communication and Psychology. She is a professor at Santa Barbara City College and the author of *Interpersonal Communication: Navigating Relationships in a Changing World*.



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KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO GROW

BY DAISY SWAN

Yoga, like all contemplative practices, brings us right to where we are. When we're in our practice, we aren't lost in worry about what's to come or what has been. This experience of breathing and of feeling our feet, our shoulders, and our legs – this attention and focus keeps us present. In these moments, the mind isn't leading us around distant rooms or disappearing into long-ago dramas. When this happens, our tree pose is balanced and centered. The discipline of returning to the pose in this way provides relief from the wanderings of our mind. And as our attention becomes more focused, our yoga practice becomes even stronger.

In the same way we feel a sense of satisfaction at the end of a rigorous and rejuvenating yoga practice; we feel the satisfaction of knowing we stayed with the challenge to complete the project. Both intention and attention empower our next moves with more clarity. People feel our presence when we are with them, listening. Our work shines because we've attended to it fully. We're effective and clear. It's true: what we pay attention to grows. Sometimes, however, we aren't aware of what we're paying attention to.

There are days when my wobbly tree pose is a good reflection of the unbalanced me, my scattered brain.

The cubicle that is just too noisy? Or are you just tuning out? Are you leaving your body, mind, and spirit behind while attempting to complete the project at hand, while just barely managing to get through the rush of the day? Are you just grabbing a quick bite instead of eating a real meal? Or succumbing to the donuts left in the office kitchen? Our practice of being present in our work life can keep us on track so we choose who we're becoming and who we're growing into. Strengthening skills and showing up as the person we choose to be in all areas of our life, including work– this, too, is a practice.

How aware are you of where your attention goes? Right now, focus for a moment on what you hear around you. Then shift your attention to focus on your shoulders, your hands, your breath. Center yourself for a moment to feel clear again about what this work practice is for you. What can awareness provide when you refocus and then return to the task at hand?

As you continue along throughout your day, notice this: When you devote your full attention to conversations with coworkers, what happens? How does the process of paying attention to the sensation of your feet walking you to your next meeting change who you can be in the meeting? This week, see if you can really pay attention to your attention. Where is it going? And then, consider: What are you getting really good at? Is it what you want to get good at? Or is there something else you'd rather choose to excel at? Jot these noticings down. Know what you want to grow. ♫

The more we practice, the more we notice a beneficial by-product of this process: the attention then seeps into our daily life. At work the same focus shows up as we toil on a task that takes time and diligence– something that would normally leave us feeling frustrated or bored. We can then realign our attention by holding the pose of persistence to get the job done.

Focused attention and attunement fly out the window, leaking throughout the day so I'm caught up in the stress of the to-do list, the worry, the rush.

Ask yourself the question: What are you paying attention to that pulls you from what you really want to become good at? Is your mind becoming irritated by the people who drive you nuts?

Daisy Swan, founder of Daisy Swan & Associates and author of *Making Work Work: Secrets from a Career Coach's Office* works with clients of all ages who are motivated to find the lifestyle that authentically works for them: daisyswan.com.





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pamper with pumpkin

BY JORDAN YOUNGER

One of the quintessential facial and body treatment ingredients of the fall season is pumpkin, which is rich in vitamins (including an array of B vitamins), minerals (including zinc), nutrients, enzymes, alpha hydroxy acids and antioxidants. Good for more than just carving into Halloween jack-o-lanterns or baking into pies or muffins, this gourd has powerful properties for replenishing and revitalizing the skin. The regenerative effects of pumpkin offer an antidote for skin that has survived the summer sun and now needs a boost to maintain balance throughout the fall. Note: These seasonal treatments are fall specials that might not appear on the spa websites; ask about their availability when calling to make an appointment.



Pumpkin Enzyme Facial

**Adrienne Skin Care –
Sherman Oaks**

While it sounds as much like a scrumptiously sweet fall dessert as a spa treatment, this enzyme-rich pumpkin facial is revered for its moisturizing and anti-aging properties. As if fresh new skin weren't enough, facials at Adrienne include deep pore cleansing, exfoliation, and a massage for the neck and face that promises to calm and restore.

75 min \$85
818-357-9225
adrienneskincare.com

Pumpkin Sugar Body Polish

**Ojai Valley Inn & Spa –
Ojai**

Simply stepping onto the grounds of the Ojai Valley Inn and Spa is rejuvenation enough, but the seasonal (September through November) pumpkin sugar body polish will serve to scrub off the fall stress and smooth out the skin for everyday balance. Fresh from the bounty of the Ojai Valley, this indulgence has a sweet aftertaste that won't increase your waistline.

50 minutes, \$145
888-697-8754
ojairesort.com

Aromatic Pumpkin Peel

**Facial Bungalow –
West Hollywood**

Reduce redness and encourage the fresh glow of your skin with Facial Bungalow's pumpkin peel. This service is an "a la carte" add-on to any of their signature custom-blended facial treatments. The aromatic peel will shed dead cells and result in fresher and smoother skin. If the in-spa application isn't enough, purchase a bottle of the peel to use at home.

As an add-on to any
facial, \$55; a la carte
30 min, \$120
323-570-2664
facialbungalow.com

Pumpkin Peel Exfoliating Treatment

**Amadeus Spa –
Pasadena**

Relax into this vitamin-rich exfoliating treatment as your skin revitalizes and repairs itself after the ravages of the summer sun. Enjoy a relaxing neck and shoulder massage while the treatment works its magic touch. This is a great treatment for sensitive skin made from hand-picked organically grown pumpkins.

115 minutes, \$60
626-578-3404
amadeusspa.com



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 Apple • Yoga Shelter • Hot 8 Yoga • Santa Monica Yoga • Yoga Co. • YogaPoser
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ojai valley california's shangri-la

BY SUZA FRANCINA

I have been blessed to live in the Ojai Valley for more than fifty years. My first home here was in the middle of an orange orchard in the East End of the valley, not far from where the world-renowned spiritual teacher Krishnamurti lived during the years of his talks under the oak trees.

It still feels magical to pick sweet, juicy oranges straight from the tree. When I wake up in the morning, the orange glow of the rising sun is reflected on the majestic mountains that surround the valley. At day's end, the mountain peaks give off a glow in the evening light known as the Pink Moment. The intense, ever-changing beauty of Ojai makes an ideal setting for practicing yoga in solitude, out in nature, or with other yogis and yoginis at events like Lulu Bandha's annual Ojai Yoga Crib (held in October) or at the studios themselves (Lulu Bandha's, Sacred Space, and 52 Weeks of Peace).

About the Ojai Valley—Getting your Bearings

The Ojai Valley is located between Santa Barbara and Los Angeles, about 15 miles inland from Ventura (a 30-minute drive or one-hour bicycle ride from the ocean). The City of Ojai is a small town nestled in the five-mile-wide valley.

This valley is widely considered one of the most sacred places on earth. Ojai is legendary for its natural beauty, healing energy, acres of avocado and citrus groves, and cultural, artistic, and spiritual significance.

The Ojai Valley was originally home to the Chumash Indians, who found sanctuary in its canyons, mountains, and unique east-west orientation, revering it as a consecrated place of healing. Ojai is a Chumash word once thought to mean nest—logical enough when you consider that Ojai is ringed by mountains. However, the name, from the Chumash word *Awhai*, means moon. Therefore, Ojai is known as “the valley of the moon.”

An aerial shot of the Ojai Valley taken from an outlook on Highway 150 was immortalized as the mythical Shangri-La in the 1937 film *Lost Horizon*. Today, Ojai is still referred to as “California's Shangri-La.”

Find Your Way

Free copies of the Ojai Visitor Guide are available around town, and I recommend picking one up to find maps for hiking trails, a guide to walking downtown, plus directions to everything Ojai.

Ojai is a bicycle/pedestrian/horseback-friendly town; most of the places mentioned here are within a few blocks, or at most, no more than three miles from downtown and can easily be reached on foot, bicycle, or via the Ojai trolley.

Bring your bike or rent one at The MOB Shop near the picturesque downtown Arcade or at Bicycles of Ojai. Ojai Avenue (which is also Highway 150) is a busy car thoroughfare, but you can get just about anywhere by using safer, quieter side streets. You can even pedal the 16-mile Ojai Trail, a paved path that runs from east of Libbey Park in downtown Ojai all the way to the beach in Ventura.



Downtown Ojai

Before hiking in the nearby hills or heading for the outskirts of town to visit Ojai power spots, stroll through the Arcade and along the streets branching off from Ojai Avenue. Here you'll find the hub of small-town downtown Ojai: art galleries, day spas, coffeehouses, a variety of shops, and lots of places to eat.

At the North Signal Street end of the Arcade, across from the Post Office, is the tasting room for Casa Barranca Winery, a certified organic winery. Across the street from the Arcade is Libbey Park, where you can relax in the shade of oak trees and enjoy a picnic.

A block around the corner from the Arcade, at Matilija and Montgomery Streets, are three of my favorite unique Ojai shops:

Made in Ojai features books, music, art, jewelry, and all kinds of amazing gifts made in Ojai by local artists, authors, and musicians. Many of the work of local artists can be seen during the annual Ojai Studio Artists Tour, October 12-14.



From Made in Ojai, head east to Montgomery Street, turn left, and you'll come upon the well-known Ojai House gift and souvenir shop and Soul Centered, a metaphysical shop with a dazzling variety of crystals and a geodesic dome in the back.

A few blocks in the opposite direction from Montgomery Street, on the corner of Matilija and Canada, is Bart's Books, the world-famous outdoor bookstore where you can browse to your heart's content. You'll find more than 100,000 titles on exterior sidewalk shelves, sold on the honor system since 1964, when the original Bart first put out a coffee can to collect money after hours.

Almost every place I've eaten in Ojai where the menu isn't meat-centric has great vegan and vegetarian dishes, and many use local organic produce. For example, Ojai Cafe Emporium, where I go to meet friends for breakfast, has a sautéed tofu and fresh veggie dish I never tire of.

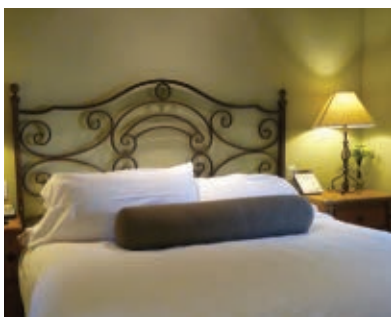
My three top places for vegan/vegetarian meals are The Farmer and the Cook in the heart of Meiners Oaks, Rainbow

Bridge, Ojai's premier natural food store and restaurant, and the Hip Vegan Cafe. The food at the Farmer and the Cook is divine; Steve Sprinkel grows most of the produce prepared in the kitchen for the all-organic vegetarian menu. And as much as I love the salad and soup bar at the Farmer and the Cook and the ready-made foods at Rainbow Bridge, I'm addicted to Hip's fresh-pressed raw Everything Juice, Extremely Raw Salad, Indonesian Wrap, and Ultimate Juicy Tempeh burger.

There are at least three coffee houses in the downtown core, and I like them all equally; where I go depends on mood and bike route. Ojai Coffee Roasting Company is across from the end of the Arcade. Java & Joe is around the corner on Matilija Street and Café Bohemia, downtown Ojai's new late-night coffee shop, is three blocks west of the Arcade.

On the way to Cafe Bohemia from the Arcade, you'll pass the renowned Oaks at Ojai health spa and the Ojai Valley Museum, both worth visiting.

Previous Page: Left to right, top to bottom			Below: Left to right, top to bottom		
Ojai Valley		Krotona Institute	Orange Groves		The MOB Shop
Ojai Retreat		Horseback Riding Trails	Lulu Bandhas		Sunido Inn
Emerald Iguana Inn Porch		Soule Park Golf Course	Farmer & Cook		Ojai House
			Ojai Inn & Resort		



Ojai Power Spots

When people ask me for my top Ojai recommendation, I tell them to take a bike ride or slow drive east on Grand Avenue (it parallels Highway 150), turn right on McAndrew Road, bear left on Reeves Road, and continue all the way up Reeves to Meditation Mount. My advice, “Don’t leave Ojai without watching the sunset from Meditation Mount.” The commanding 32-acre site is located at the highest and furthest point of Reeves Road. One can sit in meditation on the rocks and benches of the native wildflower gardens for hours, taking in the breathtaking views of the valley. Meditation Mount is open to the public Wednesday through Sunday until sunset.

On the way back, turn right on McAndrew Road. This will take you to the Krishnamurti Library and Pepper Tree Retreat, located where Krishnamurti lived. If you’ve read Krishnamurti’s sensitive descriptions of nature, you’ll realize you’re standing on the grounds where he began his meditative nature walks. The pepper trees are still there. Then head down Thatcher to Carne and back to Grand, past orange and avocado orchards and beautiful views of the mountains and valley below. Relax in the profound

peace and stillness that still pervades this part of the valley.

Krotona Hill is the home of the Krotona Institute of Theosophy: lovely gardens, panoramic valley views, a bookshop, and an extensive metaphysical library. It’s a short drive from downtown Ojai or a pleasant 20-minute bike ride on the Ojai Trail toward Ventura. If you stay on the bike trail you’ll see the Krotona sign about five minutes past the Y intersection. Turn right and go uphill till you see the Krotona Library building.

Behind the Ranch House restaurant and up Besant Hill Road is the Ojai Retreat, a hilltop getaway with overnight accommodations in a peaceful garden setting.

The sacred beauty and tranquility of Ojai have always attracted nature lovers, healers, artists, writers, yogis, and other spiritual seekers. You may join them for a day or for a lifetime. ♫

Suza Francina is a former mayor of Ojai. In addition to numerous yoga books, she is the author of *Fishing on Facebook: A Writing Yoga Memoir*, set in the Ojai Valley. She teaches yoga at Sacred Space Studio and her private home studio: suzafrancina.com.

The Spots

Bicycles of Ojai

108 Canada St
805-646-7736
bicyclesojai.com

The MOB Shop

110 W. Ojai Ave
805-272-8102
themobshop.com

Bart's Books

302 W Matilija St
805-646-3755
bartsbooksojai.com

Casa Barranca Winery

208 East Ojai Ave
805-640-1255
casabarranca.com

Made In Ojai

323 E. Matilija St
805-646-2400
madeinojai.com

Ojai House

304 N Montgomery St
805-640-1656
ojaihouse.com

Soul Centered

311 N Montgomery St
805-640-8222
soulcentered.com

Hip Vegan Café

928 E Ojai Ave
805-646-1750
hipvegancafe.com

Ojai Café Emporium

108 S Montgomery St
805-646-2723
ojaicafeemporium.com

Rainbow Bridge

211 E Matilija St
805-646-4017
rainbowbridgeojai.com

The Farmer and the Cook

339 W El Roblar Dr
805-640-9608
farmerandcook.com

Café Bohemia

214 W Ojai Ave
805-640-7210

Java & Joe

323 E Matilija St
805-646-3138
javaandjoejai.com

Coffee Roasting Company

337 E Ojai Ave
805-646-4478
ojaicoffeeroastingco.com

Oaks at Ojai

122 E Ojai Ave
805-646-5573
oaksspa.com

Ojai Valley Museum

130 W Ojai Ave
805-640-1390
ojaivalleymuseum.org

Krishnamurti Library and Pepper Tree Retreat

1130 McAndrew Rd
805-646-4773
Peppertreeretreat.com

Krotona Institute of Theosophy

46 Krotona Hill St
805-646-1139

Meditation Mount

10340 Reeves Rd
805-646-5508
meditationmount.org

Ojai Retreat

160 Besant Rd
805-646-2536
ojairetreat.com

Lulu Bandha's

306 E Matilija St
805-640-7868
lulubandhas.com

Sacred Space Studio

410 Bryant Circle, Suite A
805-646-6761
sacredspacestudio.com

52 Weeks of Peace

928 E Ojai Ave
805-646-7000
52weeksofpeace.com

October Events

Ojai Artists Studio Tour

October 12-14
ojaistudioartists.org

Ojai Yoga Crib

October 25-28
ojaiyogacrib.com



spa at home

AYURVEDIC SECRETS FOR ANYTIME REJUVENATION

BY CORINNA MAHARANI

PHOTOS BY PAUL WELLMAN

The soothing and balancing practice of spa therapies is an integral part of the science and philosophy of Ayurveda. Ayurveda is the oldest medicinal system in the world and is often called the mother of all healing. Its wisdom was derived many thousands of years ago in the Vedic civilization of ancient India and it is based on balancing energies within the body to foster well-being. Because it offers a wide variety of healing modalities, spas around the world are offering Ayurvedic services on their menus. However, you do not have to go far or spend lots of money to benefit from Ayurvedic treatments. In fact, Ayurveda can easily be adopted into your daily life and its many techniques.

Growing up in Germany, a country where spa visits are considered preventive medicine and self-care is a popular concept, I was always drawn to home spa treatments. Taking time to relax and regain one's balance is time well spent. Research has shown that stress indeed plays a prominent role in instigating disease. Ayurveda believes that cleansing techniques, such as the ones described below, can help remove toxins from the body and balance body chemistry which can lead to better health and wellness. But what makes these home spa techniques truly Ayurvedic and rejuvenating is their ability to reduce the negative impacts of stress and to calm the nervous system.

The Blissful Ayurvedic Home Spa stimulates all five senses for a complete sensory experience. This practice also provides deep relaxation. Schedule an hour during your weekend or at the end of a long day. Turn off your cell phone, light some candles, and warm your bathroom. Play some relaxing music to help deepen the process and pour yourself a steaming cup of herbal tea. Enjoy.



This spa series offers a simple opportunity to recharge, renew and revitalize the whole body and spirit. The following supplies can easily be found in your kitchen or local health food store.

SHOPPING/INGREDIENT LIST

Dry brush or loofah
Massage oil
Epsom salts
Baking soda
Aromatic sensual essential oil for bath water
Chickpea flour (or gram flour)
Aloe vera juice/gel
Green tea bags
Yogurt
Clay powder (green or white)
Honey
Herbal tea

PREPARATION

Premix the two facial potions described below and keep all materials close at hand. Run warm water into your bathtub and add ½ cup Epsom salt and ½ cup baking soda. Add a few drops of essential oil, such as lavender or rose, if you desire a scented bath. (Scents enhance the experience of relaxation.) Drop your closed bottle of massage oil into the bathwater to warm the oil while you are getting ready.

STEP 1: DRY BRUSHING

Start your home spa treatment by waking up your cells through dry brushing. Use a natural loofah or natural bristle brush for about three minutes. Sweep the brush from the feet upward, always in the direction of the heart, and brush from the hands toward the heart. Reach the back as best as possible and use gentle, upward strokes. Be delicate on the front side of the trunk and on the skin around the breast and tummy. The lymphatic system is and the immune system is stimulated by this technique of brushing the skin. Your skin softens, tactile response enhances, and toxins in the lymph fluid begin to release. Notice how invigorating this feels!

STEP 2: SELF-MASSAGE

Self-massage: Massaging your whole body with oil feeds your skin and helps to release toxins that have accumulated in your body. It relaxes the mind, improves circulation, and supports the health of the skin and the joints. Stand on a bathmat or towel and pour a small amount of the warmed massage oil into your hands and begin massaging your body, from your head to your toes. If you want to skip oiling your scalp, begin with your shoulders and move down from there. Use circular movements on the joints and long, sweeping strokes on the long bones. Pay special attention to your hands and feet. You can choose an Ayurvedic massage oil that is custom blended for you or choose any good quality vegetable oil such as sesame, coconut, almond, jojoba, or grapeseed oil. Spend four to five minutes (or more) massaging the skin and enjoy this classic Ayurvedic therapy.





STEP 3: THE BATH

In many parts of India, oiling and bathing the body is a sacred ritual; Ayurveda values the bathing experience for many reasons. Bathing after an oil application helps the oils absorb deep into the skin. The warm, salted, and scented water releases tensions held in the body. Now, to make the bath even more enriching, submerge your body into your warm bath, thinking only relaxing, happy thoughts while applying your facial.

STEP 4: THE FACIAL TREATMENT

Apply a lovely facial scrub, followed by a nourishing facial mask, to leave your skin looking radiant and glowing. Ayurvedic scrubs are mild and can be used every day to stimulate circulation, foster new skin growth, and cleanse and refine the pores. They even out skin tones while returning the skin's healthy complexion to a glowing luster.

Facial scrub recipe: mix one teaspoon chickpea flour, one teaspoon aloe vera gel or juice, and the content of one dry green teabag into a smooth paste.

Gently massage the scrub over the entire face using a circular motion, avoiding the more delicate area around the eyes. Rinse the face and dry with a hand towel.

Next, apply a facial mask to deeply moisturize the skin and nourish the tissues with vital probiotics, vitamins, and minerals. The mask ingredients stimulate the deeper layers of the skin to create new youthful skin cells, balance the skin's pH, and increase its ability to repair itself after exposure to environmental toxins.

Facial mask recipe: Mix one teaspoon yogurt, ½ teaspoon clay powder, and ½ teaspoon honey into a paste and apply to the face. Allow the mask to be absorbed by the skin for several minutes.

Lie back in the bath and let the mask absorb while you give your hands and feet a massage, relaxing like true Ayurvedic royalty.

Yogurt contains live cultures that nourish the skin. The clay is a rich source of minerals such as iron, magnesium, silica, calcium, potassium, and zinc and the honey is rich in minerals and vitamins which nourish and protect the skin.

Savor your newly relaxed state; put on your PJs or loose-fitting loungewear. Pick up your favorite photo album or a book, or even indulge in some poetry reading. My favorite poet is Rumi, the 13th century Persian mystic. I often read his poems to my clients after their treatment. The below poem captures the essence of rest and rejuvenation inherent in Ayurvedic home spa treatments. ♪

"There comes a time when
sea and land come to rest.
There comes a time when
even the heavens withdraw.

There comes a time
When weary travelers
Need to rest from the journey."
~Rumi

Corinna Maharani is the founder of Maharani Ayurveda and has been operating an Ayurvedic practice in Santa Barbara for over fifteen years where she combines her love of the science and philosophy of Ayurveda with her focus on supporting people's health and well-being: maharani.us.



EXHALE SPA IN SANTA MONICA
CAN BE FOUND AT THE FAIRMONT
MIRAMAR HOTEL & BUNGALOWS:
FAIRMONT.COM/SANTA-MONICA.

Actress, singer, and producer Kavi
Ladnier takes a break from the
pressures of everyday life in LA to
connect with herself and set her
intentions in the garden near
Exhale Spa at the Fairmont Miramar
Hotel & Bungalows in Santa Monica.
kaviladnier.com

Kavi Ladnier's clothing by
Dino Apparel: dinoapparel.com



A photograph of a person's hand holding a small amount of water, with a large fountain in the background. The water is splashing and creating a misty atmosphere. The background is slightly blurred, showing greenery and a building.

creating a relevant spa experience

SET YOUR INTENTION BEFORE BOOKING A TREATMENT

BY ALISA SPIRIT OF THE WIND

PHOTOS BY DAVID YOUNG-WOLFF

A spa treatment: It's an outing, an indulgence, even a necessity we look forward to for its potential for rejuvenation and revitalization. We can have an even more meaningful spa appointment when we have the information and the opportunity to embrace our spa experience with an eye toward authenticity and relevance.



To begin this process, let's identify what relevance and authenticity are—through taking a snapshot of what they are NOT. Imagine that you have made an appointment for a mini spa day that includes a body treatment and pedicure. You are excited because you have had a challenging week with work deadlines and surfacing marital difficulties. What you are looking for is a space of peace, quiet, and nurturance.

The spa day is at a very chic spa that is all the rage. As soon as you walk in the door, you are greeted with bright colors, music with a fast beat, and plenty of stimulation. The challenge is that, as exciting as this environment would seem to you at a different time, such as with a group of girlfriends, at that moment you are really craving a day of retreat and silence. There is therefore a disconnect between the spa environment and your own emotional space.

Therefore, the above scenario is NOT necessarily authentic – because what you were offered was not what you were seeking. You were seeking a sense of reprieve and yet you were offered a trendy adventure, so you left with a vague sense of dissatisfaction. The dissatisfaction might not be because you didn't receive good service, because you may have; but because the deeper need of why you were visiting the spa—to spend a quiet, reflective time in a nurturing cocoon of safety-- was not addressed.

One could say that the spa should have been more caring and receptive, and should have been more open to creating the space for you to feel welcomed and nurtured. You may decide at this point that a different spa would offer a better experience. While this may be true, as some spas are more adept at taking the emotional pulses of their guests, there is also one more piece of the puzzle to help you create the most authentic and nurturing spa experience possible.

This golden piece is to take the time to become clear on your intentions BEFORE you have your spa visit. The benefit of this is

that when you know exactly what you are looking for, you have the right criteria to discern the best option that will meet your needs. You will be in alignment with yourself and will have a much more fitting and nurturing spa experience that is truly authentic and which delivers a meaningful experience.

There are several reasons why people tend to visit spas, and so let's first address the process of clearly identifying your needs. Choose to take a few moments, perhaps where you are right now – or maybe even some time early in the morning or late in the day – and set aside a few moments to yourself.

Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Feel your body, as you breathe in and out. Listen to the sounds around you: the sound of your own breath, the sounds of birds nearby, the chatter of people talking in an adjacent office, or the hum of your computer. Notice the sounds around you for a few minutes. Then let this go.

Now begin to remember a time when you felt completely safe. It may have been when you were very small. Perhaps you were somewhere in nature: a beach, the woods, a meadow, a lake. Remember the sensations of that time: what you were doing, the sounds and sights around you, if anyone else was present. Remember in your body that feeling of safety and peace.

Take a moment in this calm feeling to tune into your mind and body. Think to yourself, "What has been occupying my mind lately? Have I been worried about finances? Is there a relationship that has been bothering me or needing some alterations? Are there family pressures that have been gnawing at my mind? Is my work nurturing and joyful, or is this an area that needs some care and attention?" You are looking at patterns of thoughts or worries that have been, either consciously or unconsciously, bothering you.

Continue to breathe, and be a gentle observer of these issues. You are not seeking to solve any of them, but rather just taking



the time to identify what has been on your mind and for what you might be seeking resolution or clarity.

Thank your inner being for its support in helping you gain clarity. Now you are more able to help your inner self by honoring and caring for the needs and issues that arose.

Open your eyes and return to your awareness to the room.

Take a few moments to write about the issues and/or opportunities that came up. These are the areas that you can now bring with you to help you create your ideal spa experience. You may have noticed issues that relate to experiencing excess stress, the sensation of not having enough time, or feeling pressured to conform to the patterns of life around you. You may also have issues that relate to feeling tight in your body or not giving yourself the types of movement your body craves. Sleep and fatigue may be another issue. Take a few moments to not only write about what arose, but then also what would feel scrumptious and/or rejuvenating to you.

Now let's move into action! Here are some suggested activities, treatments and experiences that you can look for that relate to the areas that came up for you during your self-reflection:

Are you seeking action – an opportunity to express your strength, test your endurance, and celebrate your power? Consider a boot camp or hiking retreat. Spas that offer guided hikes, biking expeditions, climbing workshops, or challenge courses can inspire your inner warrior.

Are you looking for an experience full of sensory pleasures? If you want to move from colorless grey to reclaiming your full vibrancy, try a spa experience that brings out the sensory palette to awaken your emotional and physical self. Try an aromatherapy service in which the practitioner customizes an oil blend to your specific needs and preferences. A sound or vibrational therapy using

singing bowls or tuning forks can balance the body on a cellular level. Spas can offer flower essences, chromatherapy, specialty teas, elixirs, and scrubs to stimulate the senses and promote harmony.

Are you struggling with the effects of mental and physical fatigue? When requested, craniosacral therapy, scalp and neck massage and yoga can create a significant shift in mental and physical exhaustion. Spas offer meditation lessons, aromatherapy and hydrotherapy to ease the pressure of mental and physical demands.

You may simply wish to withdraw from the hectic pace of life, to simply stop the spin long enough to take a breath and gain back your momentum. Your connection with a particular spa's environment and their staff can be just the haven you seek. Consider services that focus on touch such as deep tissue massage, warm body wraps, scalp treatments, and facials. Carve out regular time in your schedule and request a practitioner that you resonate with.

Once you know what you need, plan to visit a spa near you (or in another part of the world, if it makes you feel more adventurous and happy) that can provide the types of services that you now know are what you need at this moment. Spas are eager to support you in having your ultimate experience, and so the more you know what you need, the more actively the spa can respond with appropriate solutions.

Until next month, here's to your most enriching and resonant spa experiences, and to the healthy life that you deserve! 🌿

Alisa Spirit of the Wind, a senior associate with Under a Tree, is passionate about issues of sustainability and authenticity within organizations and cultures. For more information about Under a Tree and the work that we do to increase the health, vibrancy and profitability of your spas, integrated medical clinics and wellness facilities, contact us at info@underatree.com.



Bliss Spa LA
The W Hotel, Westwood
 (310) 443 8228

Enjoy trademark touches like rhythm & blues music and the legendary brownie buffet at the W Hotel's Bliss Spa in Westwood. This 7,000 square foot tension-fighting facility features ten treatment rooms, movie-while-you-manicure nail stations, luxe men's and women's lounges and an in-spa store.

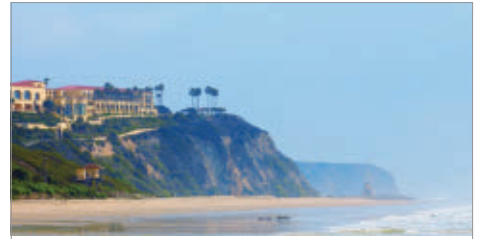
blissspa.com



rA Organic Spa
Burbank
 (818) 848 4772

From the scent of organic herbs and spices to the sound of falling water, rA Organic Spa transports you to a place of peace and tranquility. This incomparable Zen-like haven is the ideal environment for one's physical, mental and spiritual renewal.

raorganicspa.com



The Ritz Carlton Spa
Laguna Niguel
 (949) 240 2000

Sitting majestically on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean is a destination spa that exudes intimate luxury. This memorable spa vacation is set to the ever-present rhythm of the surf below. All 11 treatment rooms within this newly remodeled spa resort are bathed in soft hues of aqua and beige and boast tranquil water features, adding to the overall sensory experience.

ritzcarlton.com



Casa Laguna Inn and Spa
Laguna Beach
 (949) 494 2996

An eco-friendly, pet friendly destination, Casa Laguna was designed as a romantic getaway and tranquil escape for couples and individuals. Famous for its gourmet food, superior service, luxurious bedding, and serene terraced-garden setting, the spa pampers guests with rejuvenating massage, reflexology, salt scrubs, and relaxing soaks.

casalaguna.com



Cure Spa
Beverly Hills Plaza Hotel & Spa
 (310) 275 5575

Experience the Beverly Hills Hotel's newest sensation-CURE SPA. Let their expert staff release you from stress and rejuvenate your entire being with a full selection of massages and facials as well as a variety of signature treatments. Don't stop there, wash away time by indulging in one of their full body wraps or scrubs. Also offered are a full range of cosmetic treatments.

beverlyhillsp plazahotel.com



The Peninsula Spa
Beverly Hills
 (310) 551 2888

This is the place to revitalize your mind, body and spirit in this haven of calm with luxurious body treatments and sub-lime skincare. Their seven luxurious treatment rooms boast the latest electronic massage beds and the widest possible range of pampering, including Shiffa Precious Gem Stone Therapy, exclusive to the Peninsula Spa.

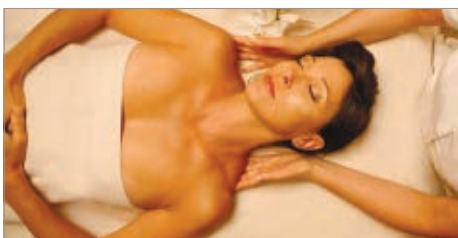
peninsula.com/beverlyhills



Huntington Spa
Langham Hotel, Pasadena
 (626) 585-6414

The Huntington Spa offers unique massage therapies, facials, body treatments and a luxurious sauna, steam room and whirlpool facilities. It also features Chuan Body + Soul, which includes treatments based on Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) such as acupressure massage and Acupuncture. A full-service salon offers makeup application, manicure, pedicure and hair services.

thehuntingtonspa.com



The Spa at Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles
Beverly Hills
 (310) 273-2222

Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills' Spa offers a wide variety of one-of-a-kind body treatments, indulgent massages and luxurious facials. Featuring eight indoor treatment rooms, two private saunas, and private pool side cabanas, the Spa truly is Los Angeles' most exclusive sanctuary for the senses.

fourseasons.com



California Health & Longevity Institute
Westlake Village
 (818) 575-1114

Located at Four Seasons Hotel Westlake Village, California Health & Longevity Institute (CHLI) is the only place of its kind, integrating five disciplines to achieve well-being goals: Medical, Nutrition, Fitness, Life Balance, and Spa. Neutralize your stress with weekly Sunset Yoga at the Pagoda classes.

chli.com

BEVERLY HILLS**Cienega Spa**

215 S La Cienega Blvd
310-601-7509
cienegaspa.com

Cure Spa, Beverly Hills

10300 Wilshire Blvd
310-275-5575
beverlyhillsp plazahotel.com

The Four Seasons Hotel

300 South Doheny Drive
310-273-2222
fourseasons.com

Lady Dee's Day Spa

155 S. Robertson Blvd
310-659-7082
ladydspa.com

Le Spa at Sofitel LA

8555 Beverly Blvd
310-278-5444
sofitel.com

The Peninsula Spa

9882 South Santa Monica Blvd
310-551-2888
peninsula.com

Spa 415

415 North Crescent Drive
Suite 110
310-276-8018
spa415.com

BRENTWOOD**The Oasis**

640 Harvest Park Drive
925-240-6274
theoasisdayspa.com

Sawa Spa

1700 Trilogy Parkway
925-809-7171
sawaspa.com

Stunners n Smashers

2485 Sand Creek Road
925-516-6262
stunnersnsmashers.com

BURBANK**ra Organic Spa**

119 N San Fernando Blvd
818-848-4772
raorganicspa.com

COSTA MESA**Bodycentre Day Spa**

660 Baker St #101
714-668-9925
bodycentre.com

Bodycentre Day Spa

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949-645-4020
bodycentre.com

CULVER CITY**The Lounge Spa**

11911 W Washington Blvd
310-398-1498
theloungespa.com

RakSa

10846 Washington Blvd
310-559-7200
raksasala.com

The Wellness Spa

9707 Washington Blvd
310-202-8133
thewellnessspa.com

DANA POINT**White Lotus Day Spa**

24582 Del Prado Suite F
949-496-2977
whitelotusdayspa.com

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2141 Rosecrans Ave
310-726-0470
murad.com

GLENDALE**The Spa in Glendale**

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818-246-2772
thespainglendale.com

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519 N La Senegal
310-360-9300
thehumbleabode.com

LAGUNA BEACH**Athena Day Spa**

611 S Coast Hwy #C
949-376-7918
athenadayspa.net

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2510 South Coast Hwy
949-494-2996
casalaguna.com

Spa Montage

30801 South Coast Hwy
949-715-6010
spamontage.com

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eurodayspainc.com

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949-240-2000
ritzcarlton.com

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323-852-1166
facesesc.com

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310-276-9670
kalologie.com

Le Petite Retreat

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323-466-1028
lprdayspa.com

Natura Spa

3240 Wilshire Blvd
213-381-2288
natura-spa.com

Olympic Spa

13915 W. Olympic Blvd
323-857-0666
olympicspala.com

Skin Camp

6530 Orange St
310-753-3442
skincamp.net

Skincare by Natalia at Bella's Beauty Salon

13050 San Vicente Blvd
310-260-7624
skinbynatalia.com

MALIBU**Cure Spa**

23708 Malibu Road
310-456-1458
curemalibu.com

OM Holistic Health Center

21241 Pacific Coast Hwy
310-456-1953
omholistichealth.com

MANHATTAN BEACH**Trilogy Spa**

451 Manhattan Beach Blvd
310-760-0044
trilogyspa.com

MARINA DEL REY**Spa Chakra**

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310-823-1700
ritzcarlton.com

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949-367-9717
burkewilliamsspa.com

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amadeusspa.com

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323-654-4411
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WESTWOOD**Bliss Spa**

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RELIEVE STRESS WITH MALAS

At the Airport...

Thank goodness I get to take some time off even if it is for the superhero convention. My mat is tired.

Looks like all our friends are here!! Hey Ozziel!!



TSA CHECK IN
NO LIQUIDS
OVER 2oz

Sorry this is over 2 ozs



Hey bro, you look down.

People complain about us all the time, but some of these passengers are downright MEAN. We're just trying to keep people safe and it stresses me out!

Lift your spirits up with some Japa!

Repeating a simple, relaxing word over and over again is a great way to calm the mind and soothe frenetic airport energy.



first class,
first class,
first class...

Do I need one of those?

Take mine. Malas keep your count and the more mantras the more power you have to fight negative energy.

Watch your breath like you were watching an airplane drift into the clouds on take off and landing.

All clear, all clear, all clear!!! Gotta remember to do this at the holidays! This is awesome!



X-RAY MACHINE

Yea, those malas are the bomb.

Really G, really?



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The Yoga Collective is honored to be a part of and serve the local Venice community and adjacent neighborhoods. The Yoga Collective offers various vinyasa/power yoga classes of all levels and styles taught by an eclectic group of experienced instructors. We strive to be a community space where everyone can nourish their spirits through the practice of hatha yoga. We want to thank everyone for being a part of and making "the Collective" a second home to so many!

512 Rose Ave., Venice. 310-392-2000. Theyogacollective.com



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1231 4th Street, Santa Monica. 310-751-7550. Naamyoga.com



SANTA MONICA YOGA SANTA MONICA

Santa Monica Yoga has a welcoming atmosphere and a huge selection of classes. The studio just celebrated its 10 year anniversary and many of the teachers on the current schedule were also around 10 years ago – helping create a sense of continuity and community that has grown over the years. New students are invited to join for their first 30 days of unlimited classes for \$65. It will take at least that long to sample some of everything – from the classical styles of Iyengar and Ashtanga to Julian Walker's Yoga with Trance Dance.

1640 Ocean Park Blvd., Santa Monica. 310-396-4040. Santamonicyoga.com



STUDIO PULSE REDONDO BEACH

Studio Pulse, a boutique fitness studio in Redondo Beach, specializes in group fitness for Spinning® and cross training classes. Signature "fusion classes" combine cardio with sculpting, core or stretching in a 30/30 format. "We have a uniquely simple approach to fitness, which is clear from our tagline: 'Spin. Sculpt. Stretch.' We want to de-mystify the process of fitness. We want everyone to get excited about staying in shape, and we encourage people to push their limits beyond what they think it possible. Whether you are a trained athlete or new to fitness, you can be challenged and motivated to reach your goals with us."

409 N PCH, #205. Redondo Beach. 310-376-6065. StudioPulseRB.com



LOTUS 7 YOGA PILATES & LIFESTYLES CENTER RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA

After two years in its location in Rancho Santa Margarita, Lotus 7 has added a second room to accommodate the demand of more classes. The additional space allows for 14 extra classes including Heated Flow, Karma Yoga and Taoist Yoga. The new space also hosts nutritional and wellness workshops as well as special events such as Thai Yoga therapy, meditation and breath work circles, and Ayurvedic self-care practicum.

29941 Aventura, Ste F, Rancho Santa Margarita. Lotus7yoga.com



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Teaching Excellence Since 1999. City Yoga is widely recognized in Los Angeles as the premiere studio to study the practice of yoga. Our Teacher Training Program is renowned world wide and has produced many of the city's leading yoga teachers. We believe that through practice of asana and meditation, students take a powerful, transformative journey.

For locations please visit: Cityyoga.com



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818-515-3948. Kundalinilifestyle.com

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Brentwood	Maha Yoga	13050 San Vicente Blvd.	310 899 0047	mahayoga.com
Burbank	Yoga Blend	1921 West Magnolia Blvd.	818 954 9642	yogablend.com
Chatsworth	Param Yoga Healing Arts Center	21750 Devonshire St.	747 224 0402	param-yoga.com
Costa Mesa	YAS East Costa Mesa YogaWorks	291 E. 17th St. 1835 Newport Blvd., Suite A208	949 548 3888 949 642 7400	go2yas.com yogaworks.com
Culver City	Omkar108 Yoga	11154 Washington Blvd.	310 853 3214	omkar108.com
Downtown	Yoga Circle Downtown The Yoga Place YAS Downtown LA	400 S Main St., # S05 110 East 9th St., A-355 831 S. Hope St.	213 620 1040 213 290 1897 213 430 9053	yogacircledowntown.com theyogaplacela.com go2yas.com
Echo Park	Yogala	1840 Echo Park Ave.	646 489 3422	yogalaechopark.com
Glendale	Yoga at the Village	1306 Sonora Ave.	818 265 9833	yogaatthevillage.com
Hermosa Beach	Hermosa Beach Bikram	518 Pier Ave.	310 318 2647	bikramyogahermosabeach.com
Highland Park	Yoga Garage	5032 Stratford Rd.	323 304 0505	layogagarage.com
Hollywood	Runyon Canyon Yoga	2000 N. Fuller Ave.	–	leavingstressbehind.com
Huntington Beach	YogaWorks	301 Main St., Suite 109	714 960 9740	yogaworks.com
Los Alamitos	Anya Flow	11138 Los Alamitos Blvd.	562 310 3411	anyaflow.com
Los Angeles	Liberation Yoga The Sanctuary Birth & Family Wellness Center	124 South La Brea Ave. 11965 Venice Blvd., Suite 307	323 964 5222 310 566 7690	liberationyoga.com birthsanctuary.com
Los Feliz	Simona Yoga Yoga Vibe	4446 Ambrose Ave. 1717 Hillhurst Ave.	323 663 0245 323 953 8449	simonayoga.com yogavibela.com
Manhattan Beach	Yoga Loft	1112 Ocean Drive	310 372 7334	www.yogaloftmb.com
Midtown	Moksha Yoga LA Blessings Center Dancing Shiva Yoga and Ayurveda Swerve Studio YogaWorks	340 S La Brea Ave. 1310 Carmona Ave. 466 Beverly Blvd. 8250 West 3rd St. 230 N. Larchmont Blvd.	323 938 5000 323 930 2803 323 934 8332 323 782 0741 323 464 1276	mokshayogala.com gurutej.com dancingshiva.com swervestudio.com yogaworks.com
Montrose	TheraYoga	4105 Oceanview Blvd.	818 541 1554	therayogastudio.com
Pacific Palisades	YogaWorks	15327 Sunset Blvd.	310 454 7000	yogaworks.com
Palm Springs Area	Kristin Olson's Urban Yoga Center Yoga Central	458 S. Palm Canyon Dr. 78-370 Highway 111, Suite 185	760 320 7702 760 861 8574	urbanyoga.org yogacentrallaquinta.com
Pasadena	Yoga Kingdom Sanctuary	553 South Lake Ave.	626 792 7871	yogakingdom.com
Santa Barbara	Santa Barbara Yoga Center Source Yoga Yasa Yoga	32 East Micheltorena St. 1911 De La Vina St. #G 22 W Mission Street, Suite B	805 965 6045 805 569 2505 805 845 4626	santabarbarayogacenter.com sourceyogasb.com yasayoga.com
Santa Monica	Exhale Hot 8 Yoga Naam Yoga LA YogaWorks YogaWorks	101 Wilshire Blvd. 1422 2nd str 1231 4th Street 2215 Main St. 1426 Montana Ave.	310 319 3193 310 866 5280 310 418-3855 310 664 6470 310 393 5150	exhalespa.com hot8yoga.com naamyoga.com yogaworks.com yogaworks.com
Sherman Oaks	Black Dog Yoga	4454 Van Nuys Blvd., #206	818 380 0331	blackdogyoga.com
Silver Lake	Silverlake Yoga Center YAS Silverlake	2810 1/2 Glendale Blvd. 1932 Hyperion Ave.	323 953 0496 323 665 6011	silverlakeyoga.com go2yas.com
South Bay	YogaWorks Equinox	740 Allied Way 5400 Rosecrans Ave.	310 322 6500 310 727 9543	yogaworks.com equinox.com
Studio City	City Yoga Yoga Shelter	12265 Ventura Blvd. 12408 Ventura Blvd.	818-506-9642 818 691 3000	cityyoga.com yogashelter.com
Tarzana	YogaWorks	18700 Ventura Blvd., 2nd Flr.	818 457 6900	yogaworks.com
Valencia	YogaWorks	23951 Newhall Ranch Rd.	661 799 2645	yogaworks.com
Valley Village	InYoga Center	5142 Laurel Canyon Blvd.	818 508 8040	inyogacenter.com
Venice	Exhale The Yoga Collective YAS Venice	245 South Main St. 512 Rose Ave. 1101 Abbot Kinney Blvd.	310 450 7676 310 392 2000 310 396 6993	exhalespa.com theyogacollective.com go2yas.com
West Hollywood	City Yoga	7904 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 214	323 654 2125	cityyoga.com
Westlake Village	YogaWorks	2475 Townsgate Rd.	805 371 3030	yogaworks.com
Westwood	YogaWorks	1256 Westwood Blvd.	310 234 1200	yogaworks.com
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astrology oct 2012

VEDIC ASTROLOGY BY SAM GEPPI

An Emphasis on the Social Contract.

October 2

Mercury enters Libra until October 23. This is a good time for relationship communication and flexibility in your partnerships. Mercury joins Saturn in Libra. Both Saturn and Mercury are neutral planets, which relate to seeing beyond our likes, dislikes, and passions. This neutrality inserts a healthy distance between our emotions and life situations. Being more objective about our own likes and dislikes allows us to accommodate the needs of others.

October 5

Jupiter turns retrograde in Taurus. Jupiter will be retrograde until January 30, 2013. When a planet turns retrograde, it appears to be moving backwards, based on our earthly vantage point. This backward motion forces us to reflect on the deeper meaning of the planetary energy. In this case, we will be challenged to apply our teachings in a practical way and see if they are actually improving our life – or if they are mere beliefs. A crisis of faith may follow a health problem, money problem, family problem, or other worldly situations gone wrong.

October 9-10

Saturn in Libra aspects Moon in Cancer. According to the ancient stories of India, it was the aspect from Saturn that cut off Lord Ganesha's head when implored by Parvati to look upon her child. The pressure of time and our fear of loss will bear down on us for a few days as Saturn aspects the Moon in Cancer. Those things you are attached to may suddenly need a lot of work, and you may question if that work is worth the reward. Childhood pains and patterns may rear their ugly heads.

October 15

The Libra cycle begins as the Sun and Moon come together at the very edge of Virgo. The Sun partners with Saturn (already in Libra), to bring an emphasis on relationships, including romantic relationships, social obligations, and the need to honor all people's wishes as equal to our own. Compromise is currency in Libra. It buys happiness, wealth, and success when in abundance.

An aspect from (retrograde) Jupiter from Taurus shows some ease and grace as we navigate these sticky "other-people" lessons. But this retrograde motion may also leave us confused about how to juggle our values and the needs of others.

This New Moon happens in *Chitra Nakshatra*, which ruled by the God *Vishwakarma*, the divine architect. You may

benefit by doing some creative work with others, and building something of meaning in the community.

October 18-19

Mars, *Rahu*, and the Moon in Scorpio will be challenging emotionally and may lead to some personal conflict and turmoil. Scorpio is a restless sign, interested in strengthening our emotional weaknesses, which is hard for the "Moon" part of our self – the nature of selfless love in us. Mars and *Rahu* are both challenging and aggravating energies. Be careful in your romantic relationships.

October 24

Venus becomes debilitated in Virgo until November 17. Venus is the part of us that wants to enjoy life and be happy. Virgo is a sign of fussiness and nitpicking. The highest quality of Venus energy brings a "happiness for no reason" nature. During this time, we may find every reason in the world not to be happy. However, this could be beneficial for beautifying your home and improving those areas of life that have been in neglect.

October 29

Full Moon in Aries is a time when we will harmonize the compromising nature of Libra with a more individualized self-expression through Aries. The new Moon which occurred October 15 in Libra initiated a cycle of relationship and social compromise. But we can only share ourselves authentically from a place of strength. Anything less feels abusive at some point. Aries is that sign of personal self-expression, where we enthusiastically pursue our individual creativity.

This Full Moon takes place in *Ashwini Nakshatra* – symbolized by two horses running in different directions. There is enormous energy, will, and drive behind this new moon. Ashwini is also known as "the physicians of the gods", bringing immense healing. But care must be taken to not destroy connections impulsively, only to regret it later.



Sam Geppi is an internationally-respected Vedic astrology teacher. For free Vedic astrology DVDs and courses for students at all levels, visit Samgeppi.com

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SUNDAY TOPICS ~ OCT 2012

OCTOBER 7

What Is Truth?

OCTOBER 14

Ways to Conquer Fear

OCTOBER 21

What Is the Soul?

OCTOBER 28

Overcoming Nervousness

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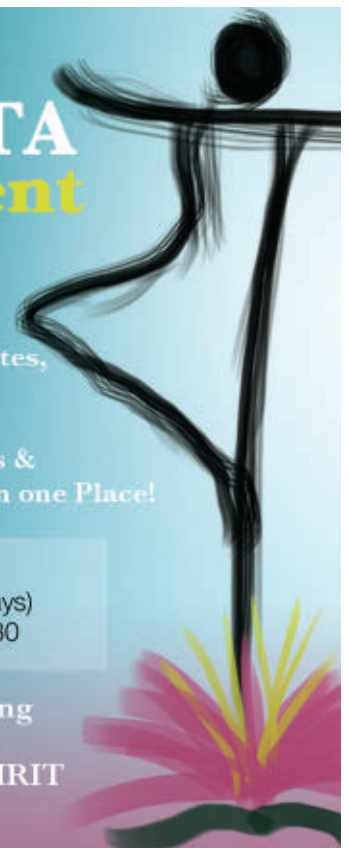
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ketu: spirituality

PAINTING AND TEXT BY SARAH TOMLINSON DEVANAGARI AND TRANSLITERATION BY DR. JOHN CASEY

In Vedic Astrology, the South Node of the Moon is described as one of the shadow planets – its name in Sanskrit is Ketu. Ketu represents the force that is hidden and unseen, life's deeper mysteries.

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the background between the gold outline and the first circle; the deep earthy-sage green color of this bhupur is a gateway from the external to the internal. The murky blues, sages, and ochre greens inspire a mystical inward journey where attachment to worldly affairs fades in favor of inner wisdom and knowledge. The play of the lighter shades of green and yellow ochre with the shimmering gold and silver lines brings your focus to the center of the Yantra as you find a new place of rest within.

By withdrawing from that which emphasizes our differences in society and focusing on the unity of consciousness that pervades the entire cosmos, you will find yourself in a place of balance.

ॐ के केतुवे नमः

om kem ketuve namah

I am balanced by the connection of ketu

Sarah Tomlinson is the author of *Nine Designs for Inner Peace* (Destiny Books, 2008) and a student of the late, great Harish Johari. She teaches Yantra Painting and Yoga worldwide. For more information: yantritecture.com

Dr. John Casey teaches classes in Sanskrit and Yoga philosophy at Loyola Marymount University, at the University of California at Irvine and at Yoga studios and other venues around the country. For LMU classes, visit: lmu.edu

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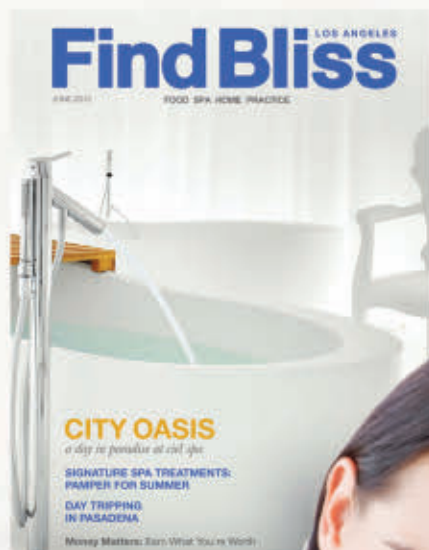
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